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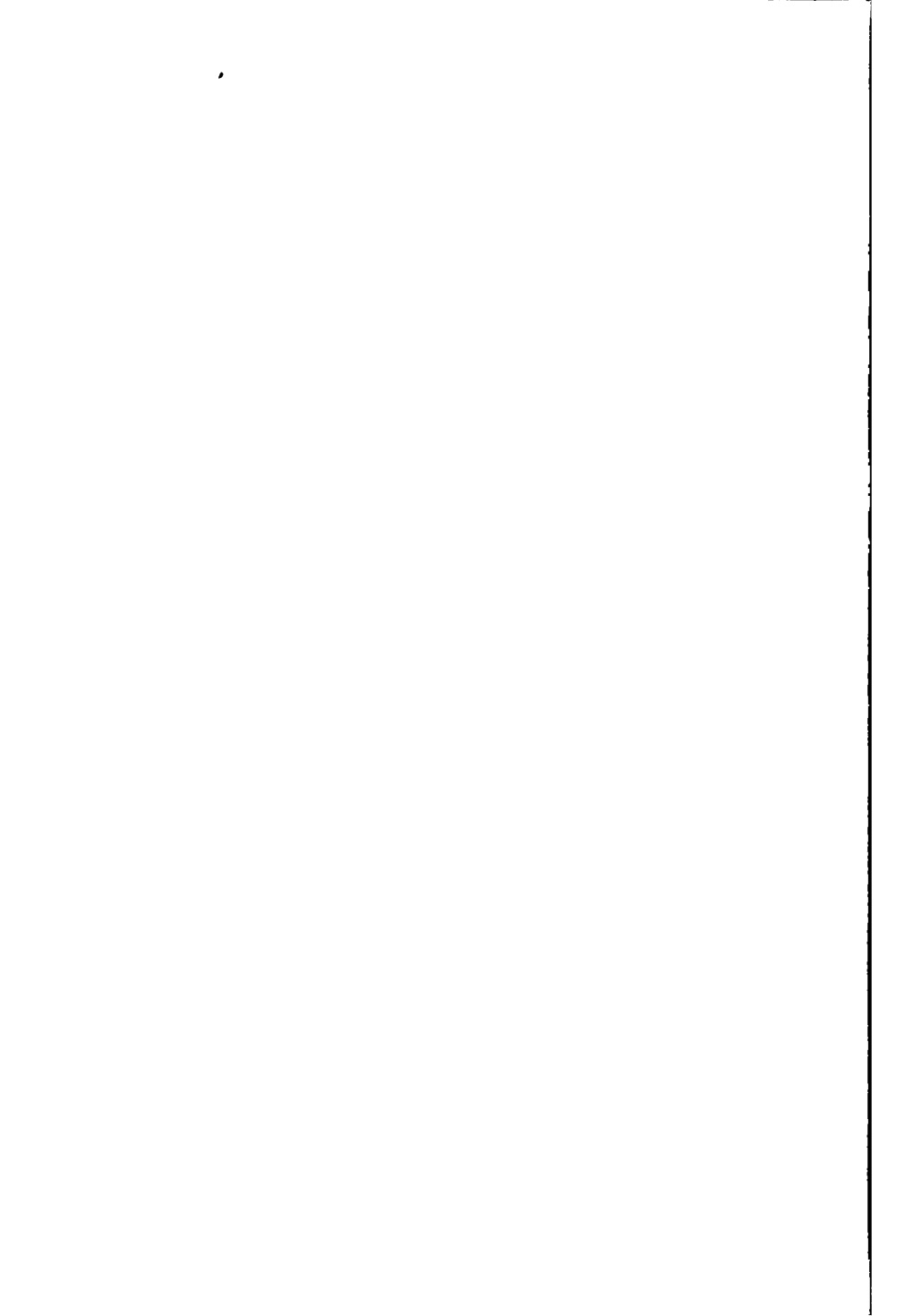
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JESUS AND MODERN LIFE

BY

M. J. SAVAGE

With an Introduction

BY PROFESSOR CRAWFORD H. TOY

*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.—JESUS
God has never left his world ; for the truth is always his voice, speak-
ing equally to all who will hear in every age*

BOSTON

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1898

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Dedication

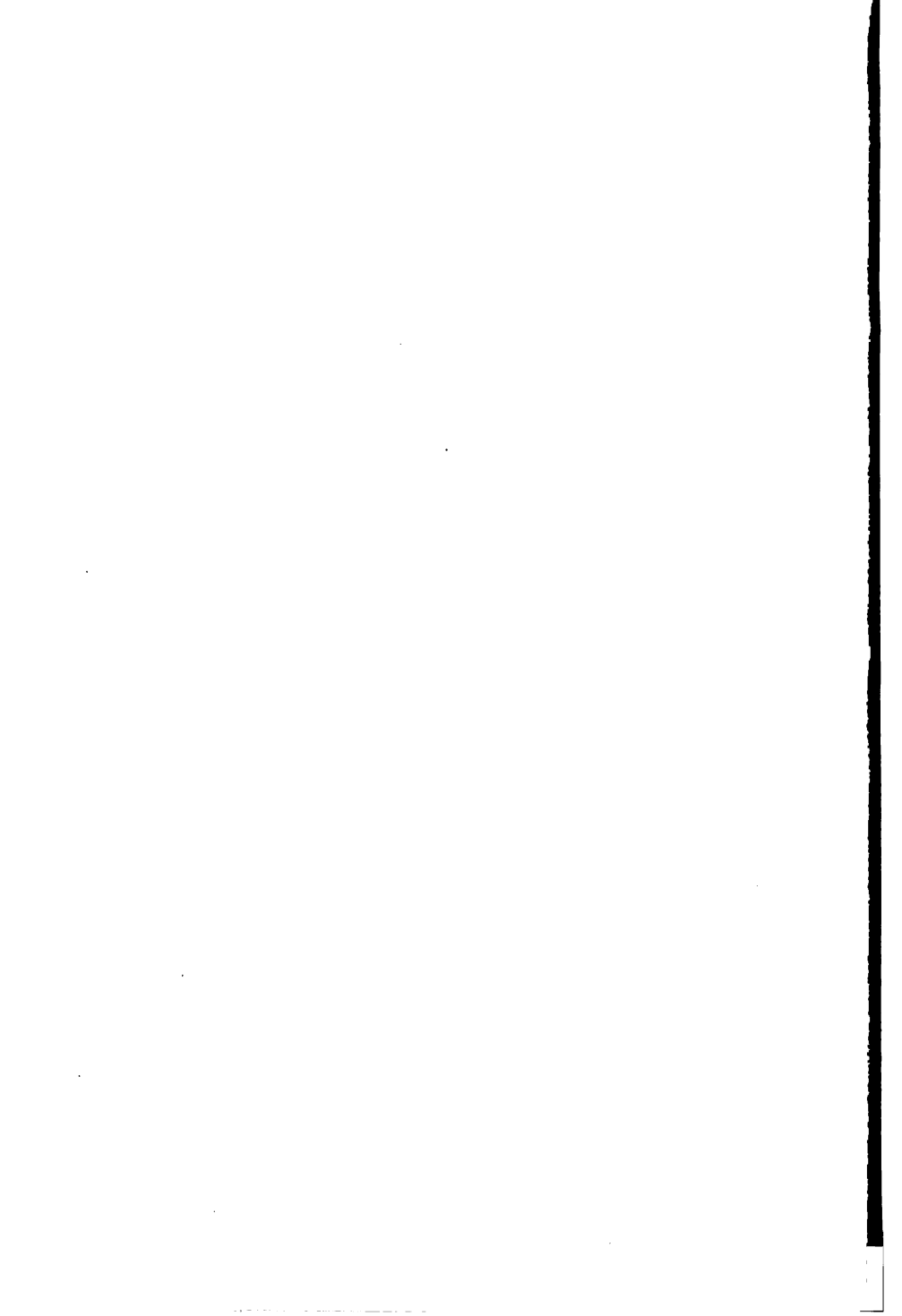
IN RECOGNITION OF HIS KINDLY SYMPATHY, NOT LESS THAN HIS CLEAR

AND PROFOUND SCHOLARSHIP, I GRATEFULLY

DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO

PROFESSOR CRAWFORD H. TOY

OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY



PREFACE.

I HAD laid out the course of sermons which make up this volume, under the title "The Teachings of Jesus," just as a book appeared bearing the same title. This was a translation of a part of a larger work by Dr. H. H. Wendt, Professor of Theology in Heidelberg. It then seemed best to take another name.

I wish now simply to indicate what I have tried to do.

In the first place, I have sought to find out, so far as is to-day possible, the actual beliefs and teachings of Jesus. Every careful student knows that his biographers have frequently misunderstood and misreported him. The first three Gospels are traditional growths, and took their present shape years after the death of Jesus, and in an age devoid of any critical care, and before anything like accurate reporting was heard of. The writers and final editors were necessarily biassed by the dominant ideas of their time. To sift these, as best we may, is the first task.

Then, when I have supposed I had the actual teaching of Jesus, I have considered it as related to the preceding thought of the world, and specially of his own people.

After that, in the third place, I have tried to find out how much of it is vital to-day, and how it bears on the problems, religious and other, with which we must deal.

Only in some such way as this can we really find out to what extent, and in what sense, Jesus is a present leader and inspiration.

In this work I have had the great help and satisfaction of consultations with many friends. But my special acknowledgments are due to Professor C. H. Toy of Harvard University. He has been kind enough to point out one or two errors. They do not touch the main drift of the work or its conclusions. As the pages are already electrotyped, I will note what they are here.

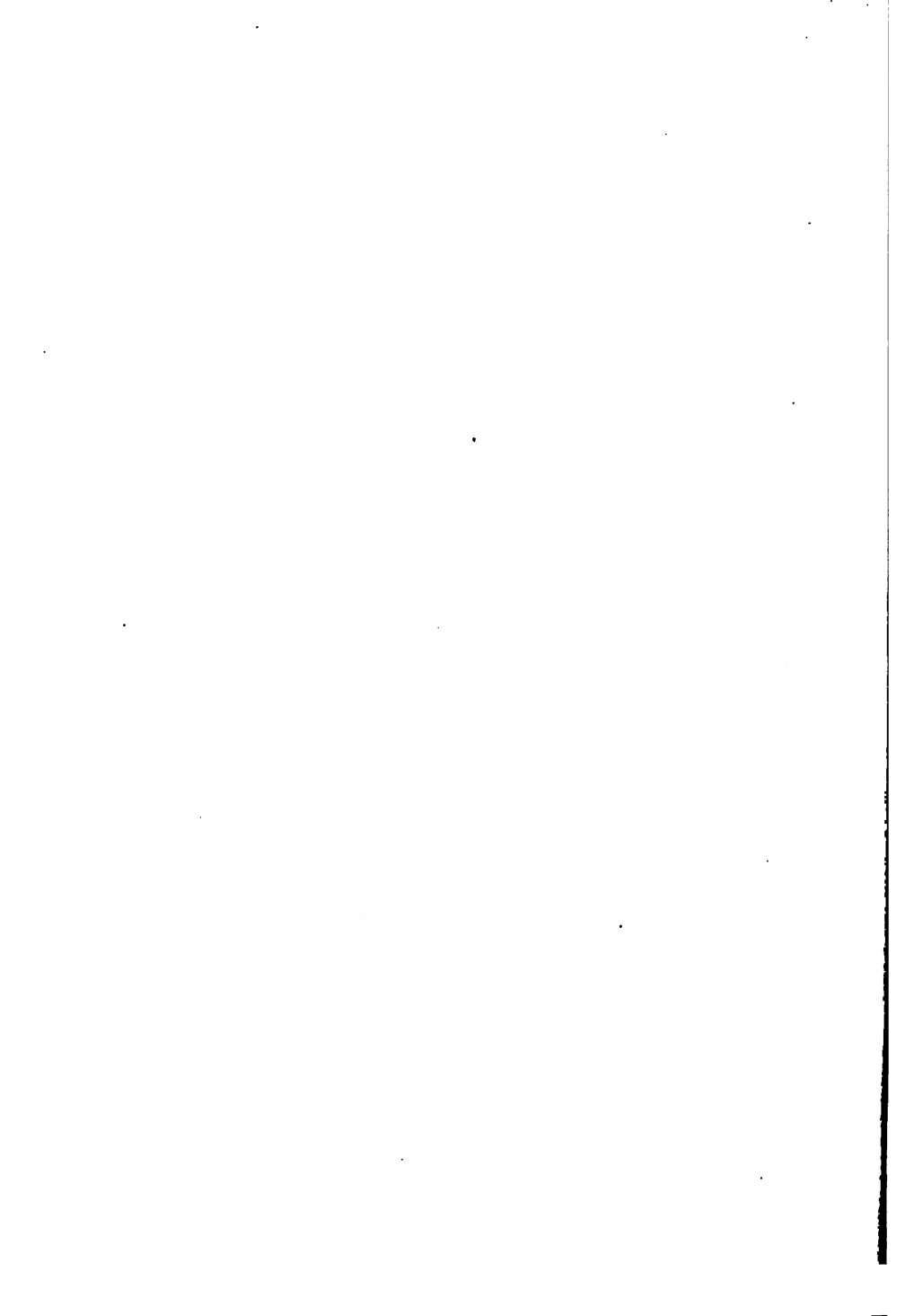
In Chap. II., I have spoken of the Aramaic as a mixture of the Hebrew and the Syriac tongues. Professor Toy writes me, "Aramaic is a distinct dialect: it is the general term of which Syriac is a variety."

In Chap. IV., in company with such men as Matthew Arnold, I spoke of Yahwe as probably meaning the eternal or self-existent Being. The Professor thinks it cannot mean this, but says what it does mean is "doubtful."

But, after making these minor criticisms, he writes (I quote with his permission): "I have greatly enjoyed your sermons on 'Jesus and Modern Life'; and I cannot say that I differ from you at all in your general conclusions. The spirit

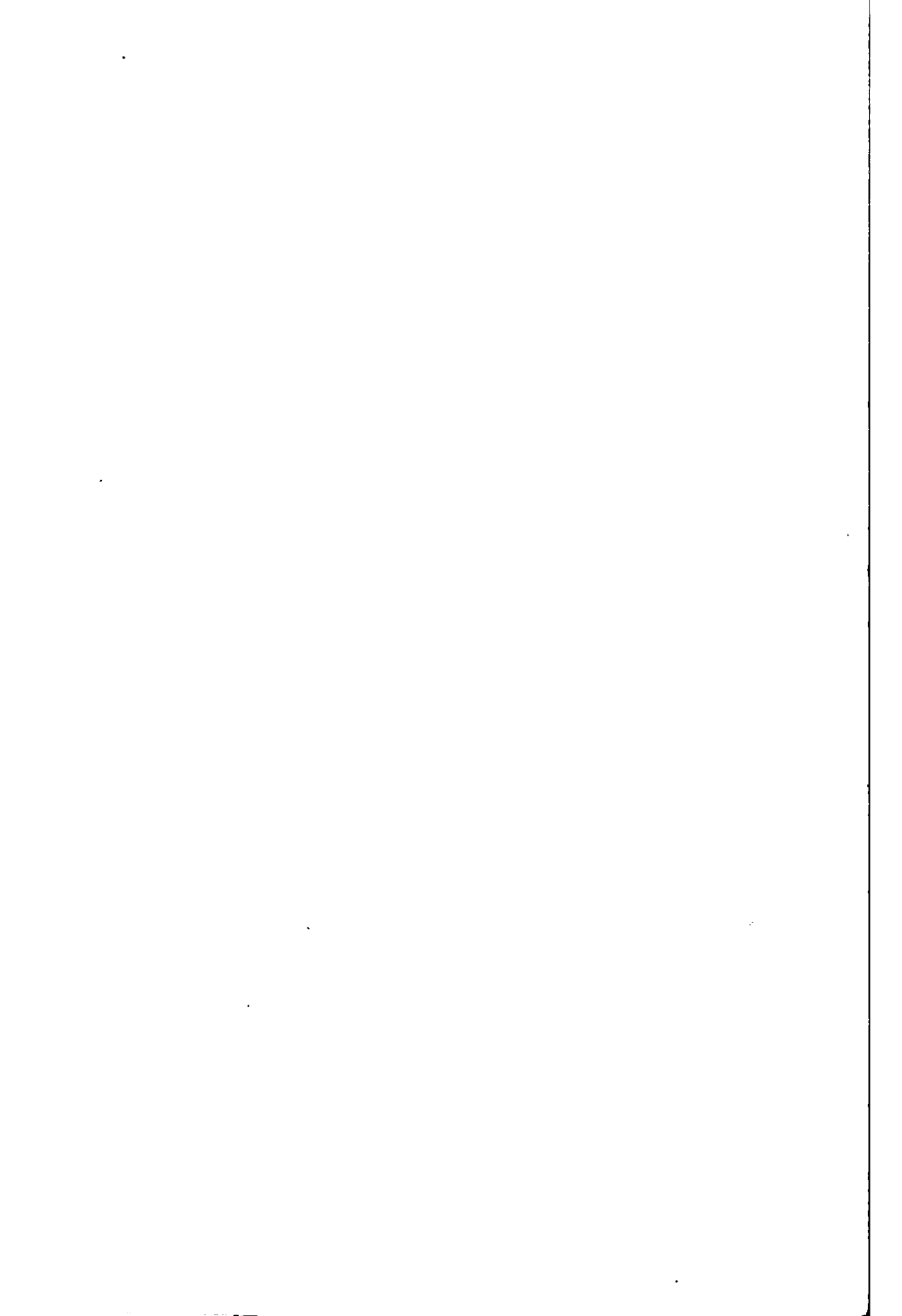
of your inquiry seems to be just right : your critical positions are sound, and your applications of the teachings of Jesus to modern life very judicious. It is of prime importance to say what is permanent in Jesus, and this you do, I will not say finally (for to live is to learn), but satisfactorily. I feel, therefore, that we are indebted to you for this series of sermons."

Boston, June 16, 1893.



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INTRODUCTION.

BY PROFESSOR CRAWFORD H. TOY.

THE transcendent position which Jesus occupies in the religious thought of the world makes it peculiarly desirable that we should clearly perceive what part of his teaching belongs to the enduring ideal and what to the conditions of his own time and place. So much has been written about him that this question, it would seem, should have been answered long ago. But, in the first place, a transcendently great man is not exhausted by many books ; and, in the second place, his peculiar position has made it difficult for most persons to think or write of him soberly. There are many who think it irreverent to criticize his life ; some, in the rebound from the doctrine of his divinity, have failed to do him justice ; many have been entirely taken up with the criticism of the Gospel narratives ; few have attempted a sympathetic criticism of his inner life and a precise statement of what is significant for us in his teaching. This is what Mr. Savage undertakes to do in the following pages. In the spirit and the general results of his critical analysis of the Gospel narratives he is at one with the best modern authorities. His description of the relation of Jesus to modern

life will be welcome, I cannot doubt, to all those who are interested in the moral-religious culture of our times. Such a portraiture of the thought of Jesus as the following chapters present should invest it with the noblest reality, and make it an ideal in the sense in which Jesus himself wished to be considered an ideal. It is a strange fact that few things are so little studied as the life of Jesus of Nazareth. May this book arouse in many a mind the desire to comprehend that life and to appropriate its truth!

FINDING WHAT JESUS TAUGHT.

THIS course of sermons I am to devote to a careful consideration of the teachings of Jesus as related to the thoughts and beliefs of his age, and as bearing upon the problems of modern life. But, before I can come to consider what Jesus taught, we must try to find out what that teaching was. What did he actually say? What were the positions which he held concerning the great beliefs of the ages?

It is a very simple thing, in one way, for those who hold to the infallibility of the New Testament records, to answer this question. They have only to turn to the Gospels as they actually exist in our present translations, select the teachings, classify or group them, and then read and study. If they meet any contradictions, or apparent contradictions, any inconsistencies, any apparent impossibilities, or difficulties of any kind, they will simply bow their heads, and say, "This is not a matter for human reason," and leave these questions to faith. This, I say, is the attitude which must be taken by those who believe that the gospel records, as we have them, were infallibly inspired, and have been transmitted to us in a practically complete form. But there are those who are willing, for the sake of argument at least, to concede this point, but who move in precisely the opposite direction. For example, my friend the Rev. Charles Voysey, of London, has recently been giving a course of sermons on the character and teaching of Jesus. He con-

cedes, for the sake of argument, the position of those who hold that the gospel records are infallible ; but, instead of passing over the difficulties, accepting them on pure trust, and refusing to reason about them, he chooses to look them calmly in the face. And he comes to the conclusion,—somewhat startling, perhaps, to those who have not given any very careful attention to this matter, but who have been accustomed to read the Gospels without much thinking,—he comes to the conclusion that the conception of God which Jesus teaches is not a noble or worshipful conception, and that his own character, as illustrated by his teaching, is anything but the ideal one which is ordinarily conceded. Here, then, are two ways of looking at the gospel records, admitting that they are infallible and that they contain all that we know about Jesus.

But this is not the way in which the free and scholarly world of the present time is looking at these records, not the way in which I am to treat them. For I wish you to note and understand that it is not Unitarians only, not free thinkers only, not those who are willing to wear the name “liberal” alone, who are treating the gospel records as human literary productions, full of mistake and error. Let me give you two or three illustrations of the way these problems are being looked at and treated by those who still stand in honored places within the ranks of conventional Orthodoxy.

The Rev. Edwin A. Abbott, of England, one of the most scholarly men of our time in these directions, is the author of an article entitled “Gospels” in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,—an article long enough to make a book ; a careful, conscientious, critical treatment of the gospel records. And he concedes, as taken for granted among scholars, all the results of historical criticism. He says the Gospels

are simple literature, that they were not written by the men whose names they bear, that they are the result of long periods of growing and changing tradition, and that they have come into their present shape nobody knows precisely when or where or how.

Another man, the Rev. Arthur Wright, a fellow and tutor of Queen's College, Cambridge, Eng., is the author of a very fine book on "The Composition of the Four Gospels"; and he takes precisely similar ground to that occupied by Dr. Abbott. He makes no claim that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear. He makes no claim that they are perfect, that they are infallible. He points out inconsistencies and contradictions, and shows how, by a purely natural process, they have come to be what they are. Another witness let me bring,— Dr. Hans Heinrich Wendt, a German professor of theology in the university at Heidelberg. He has recently published a book, a part of which has been translated in this country, under the title "The Teaching of Jesus." He treats the Old Testament as purely a human production, full of all sorts of error. He says that Paul and the other apostles undoubtedly misunderstood and misinterpreted the teaching of Jesus. And he says that we must get at what Jesus really taught by a pure method of historical criticism, precisely as we would find out the teaching of Plato or any other ancient writer whatsoever. But he believes, curiously as it seems to me, that when, by this human, imperfect method, we have found what Jesus really taught, we are in possession of an infallible, divine revelation of unchangeable truth. The point I wish to note, however, is that he, believing in the infallibility of the teaching of Jesus, is yet compelled, as a scholar, by the results of modern research, to take this position concerning the authenticity of the Gospels which is maintained by us.

And not only these men. I wish simply to note, as showing the tendency and drift of the age, that Dr. Briggs, the famous professor in the Presbyterian seminary in New York City, is now on trial for heresy because he holds that the Bible is not perfectly infallible in every part. Professor Smith of Lane Seminary in Ohio, another Presbyterian institution, is also on trial for holding a similar view. You will see, then,—and this is the point that I wish to call your attention to,—that the scholarly men, the men who not only study and think, but are brave enough to say what they think, are coming, with great rapidity, to occupy this position. Professor Tucker of Andover, in last week's *Christian Union*, has an article in which he treats one, at least, of the generally accepted doctrines of Orthodoxy—one which I think is most clearly taught in the words of Jesus himself—as a matter, not of dogma, but of opinion,—a matter which a minister is free to reject or hold as he will. Here, then, are some of the indications of the feeling of the world concerning the nature of the records that contain the teaching of Jesus. I bring them to you, not in any spirit of controversy whatsoever,—that is farthest from my purpose. I bring them to you merely to show that before we can discuss intelligently the teachings of Jesus we must try to settle upon some rational method of finding out what those teachings are. For while I believe without question that there is a nucleus of teaching, a certain amount, which is rationally beyond question and which we may attribute without any doubt to Jesus of Nazareth, this nucleus is surrounded by a fringe concerning which we must say that we are uncertain. He may have said this particular thing which he is reported to have said, and he may not. Probably, with all the resources of scholarship which we can bring to bear upon it, there are many points concerning which we cannot arrive at any practical certainty.

Not only, then, is the orthodox scholarship of the world conceding to-day that we must treat the Gospels as we would treat any other book,—by the methods of careful study, by applying to them the principles of historical criticism,—not only this, but, when we come within the ranks of the avowed liberals themselves, we are face to face with an uncertainty as to how we are really to get at the teaching of Jesus, which throws upon any one man a large amount of responsibility. I have recently been in correspondence with a professor at Harvard, one of the most scholarly men, in these directions, that there is in America to-day, or perhaps in the world. I have asked him if he can point out to me any certain guide by which I may be able to decide, in all cases or in most cases, as to whether Jesus taught this particular thing or that particular thing,—whether he is in possession of any critical method that he feels certain of. And he tells me that, so far as he knows, there is no such method that can be counted as in any wise fixed or certain. He thinks there are a few general principles, and that in the light of them, using them as a torch, we must thread our pathway the best we can.

But, before coming to outline some of the principles which will guide me in my discussion, I wish to say a few words concerning a method—very common, as it seems to me, particularly among liberals—which, in my judgment, cannot be rationally allowed for one moment. It is very common for men, as they read any book, to light on and see with great clearness the things they wish to see, the things that are in accordance with their own opinions, the things that would tend to bolster up their own ideas; and, without any conscious dishonesty at all, they may be blind to the plainest statements which go against their views. I remember at this moment a bright, witty, and very forcible saying of Henry Ward Beecher's upon this very point: I think I quoted it in

this place some years ago. He said, "Some men, when they read the Bible, go through it as a magnet goes through a dish of sand containing iron filings ; and they come out of it with the texts which they happen to like sticking all over them." So people go through the Bible : they light on and discover the texts which they happen to like, and these cling to them, and they bring them out and treat them as if they were the Bible, forgetting that there may be quite as many, that are quite as clear and quite as forcible, which could be interpreted the other way.

What, then, do I mean by the common method of liberals? I have in mind an incident. I do not wish to call names, lest I might be misunderstood ; for I have no personal feeling whatever towards the men : I wish simply to point out what seems to me the viciousness of a method.

Some years ago I was present at the dedication of an important church in another city, a Unitarian church. One of the dearest and noblest old ministers that have ever belonged to the Unitarian ranks was to preach the sermon. I, a young man, and then new to the place, was asked to read the Scripture lesson. I went to the preacher, and desired him to select that which he wanted me to read. He did so, taking a certain chapter in John ; but, running his finger down the page, he said, coming to a particular verse : "Don't read that. Jesus never said that." Well, from that day to this, I have never been able to understand why Jesus never said that, except that the particular ideal of Jesus which this clergyman cherished would not have said it. In other words, it seems to me common for ministers to go to the New Testament with a preconceived ideal of what kind of man Jesus was, what he must have believed, and what he must have taught, and then to use that as a standard of critical judgment, and say that he could not have done, and he must not

have done, and he could not have said things which are inconsistent with this personal preconceived ideal.

For example, a minister, a friend of mine, told me three or four years ago that, if he thought Jesus taught the doctrine of the second coming, which is certainly attributed to him in the plainest possible way, he should lose all respect for him. I could never see why. Possibly he did not teach those doctrines; but certainly I have no right to decide that he did not teach them merely because, if he did, he would not be the kind of Jesus I had taken him to be. That certainly is not criticism. There is a certain wing or section of the Universalist Church—I refer to this, again, merely by way of pointing out this principle, not with any invidious purpose—who, while they hold to the infallibility of the teaching of Jesus and to the divinity of his character, yet, it seems to me, overlook or reinterpret certain things that he said, particularly in regard to future punishment, in a way to bring him into accordance with their own ideas, in a way that is not warranted by the letter of the New Testament itself.

And once more, to carry out this idea a little farther, I want to refer to another personal experience of my own. I have often been criticised since I have been in this city for not saying enough in my sermons about Christ, for not using the word "Christ" as often as the critics have wished I might have done. With this in mind, I went to one of the most distinguished of our Unitarian divines one day,—one who had been accustomed to use the word "Christ" very commonly in his pulpit; and I asked him a plain question. I said, "Will you tell me, when you say 'Christ,' if you always have in mind, or if you always mean, the historic person, Jesus of Nazareth?" And he frankly said no; and I found, by his explanation, that what he meant by "Christ"

was the perfect, ideal humanity, that ideal which has been filled with all the highest and finest spiritual teachings and inspirations and aspirations of the last two thousand years, not the historic Jesus of Nazareth at all. I did not say so to him; but I have thought a great many times that I should have no objection to saying "Christ" with that meaning in mind, provided I could be sure that I was understood. But I certainly should not feel justified in using "Christ" in that sense, when I knew the people who sat in the pews were thinking all the while that I was referring to the historic Jesus of Nazareth. I asked one of the most distinguished Episcopal clergymen in this country one day the same question, and he gave me the same answer. I refer to these as illustrations of what are *not* critical methods of getting at the real Jesus, what he was or what he taught. Let me turn now to the positive side, and indicate to you, as clearly as I can, in the time that is allowed me, what seem to me to be the guiding principles that we must try to follow.

And, in the first place, we need before all things to get clearly into our minds the condition of affairs in the early church at the time in which the Gospels appeared. You are familiar with the fact, for I have had occasion to speak of it more than once,—yet I must now set it here firmly in its place, as if I had never referred to it before,—you are familiar with the fact that the first church in Jerusalem, that the apostles, that Paul, that all the early Christians, fully expected that Jesus would appear again in the clouds of heaven before the generation that existed at the time of his crucifixion had passed away. Our earliest witness here is Paul. At perhaps fifteen or twenty years—we are not quite sure—after the death of Jesus, we find Paul teaching this doctrine: that almost any day the trumpet might sound and the dead rise, and Jesus, accompanied by a great multitude of angels,

appear in the clouds of heaven ; and that, as the result of that coming, the present order of things was to pass away, and the kingdom of God be established here on earth. That was the universal belief of all the apostles of all the early churches.

I do not know myself—at any rate, I shall not discuss the question this morning—whether Jesus really taught that. Scholars are divided about it. Perhaps, as it embodied the expectations of the people of his time, they put these beliefs or these teachings into his mouth. He is reported to have taught that ; and we know that it was the universal belief. Now note that in that condition of things no one would have thought of there being any need of a written record of the life or the teachings of Jesus. Consequently, no attempt was made to have any record. The Gospels, as we have them to-day, conservative critics (like the Rev. Arthur Wright, to whom I have referred, a Churchman) believe appeared not earlier than 70 or 80 A.D. ; that is, not earlier than forty or fifty years after the death of Jesus. At first, then, there were no written records, there were no printing-presses, there were no shorthand reporters ; and nobody, as he followed Jesus or listened to his teaching, ever thought of such a thing as making any record of what he did or what he said.

How, then, were these records preserved ? How do they come down to us ? As the early churches were organized, and while they were waiting for this second coming in the clouds of heaven, there would be, as you can very easily see, a necessity for somebody to teach the main facts in regard to the life of Jesus, to teach the main principles of what he said, as to the opinions that he held and to which he gave utterance. There were young people in the church, there were people who had never seen Jesus who were coming

into the churches, not only among the Jews, but all over the Roman Empire ; and the very process of making them Christians would necessitate the telling of the story of the life and the teachings of the Nazarene. And so there sprang up in the early churches,—mention of them is very common in the New Testament, though perhaps you may never have noticed it or appreciated what it meant,—there sprang up a class of men called catechists, or catechisers, and their pupils were catechumens.

How were the Jews accustomed to study the law and the principles of their Old Testament? The teacher would sit in the presence of the class,—precisely as he does in the East to-day, for this method has come down through all these centuries,—and tell verbally the story, repeat the facts or precepts, and the pupils would write them down from the lips of the teacher. Then they would memorize them, so far as they were able, wipe out this lesson, and be ready to go through a similar process at the time of their next meeting. So the catechisers in Jerusalem and throughout Judea and Galilee, and even in Asia Minor and as far as Rome, would have their classes on certain days ; and they would tell them the story of the life and death of Jesus. They would repeat the words which they had heard that Jesus had said, and these would be written down by the catechumens, or pupils, committed to memory, and learned. And so the gospel was transmitted from lip to lip through all these years, no permanent record being made in all this time.

The first tradition, the earliest story, that we have of Jesus, is that contained in the Gospel according to Mark. It is supposed to have behind it the authority of Peter. Mark was a friend and pupil of Peter, he was a chief catechiser, and was regarded as the author of the story as it appears

now under his name. But we are not to suppose, therefore, that Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark in the shape in which we have it to-day. It is simply that this came to be regarded as the doctrine or tradition which Mark, as the great catechiser, had been accustomed to repeat. This was the form of the Gospel which was most in use and authority in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine.

Next in order of time comes Matthew's ; and that grew up in substantially the same way. Matthew did not write it : we do not know who put it into its present shape. It is merely the story of the gospel that was current in the East, which was the field of Matthew's ministry, and which was supposed to have Matthew behind it as its substantial author and the one who gave it authenticity. Luke comes next, and represents substantially the Pauline gospel. This was the gospel that was current in the churches Paul had founded in the West and clear on to Rome ; and this is later than either Mark or Matthew, but it grew up in substantially the same way.

John,—I give the opinion of the best scholars, men like Dr. Martineau, for example,—John was written, nobody knows by whom, probably between the years 140 and 150 A.D. ; that is, in the middle of the second century. It is pervaded by the atmosphere and saturated with suggestions of the thought of that time,—an atmosphere and a type of thought that did not exist for years after the time of Jesus, and could not have existed until then. There is precisely the same kind of argument against its having been written by John that you yourselves would instantly see against a book which was supposed to have been written a hundred years ago, and which was full of catchwords concerning Darwinism and evolution : you would know without any tutoring that that book could not have been written before Darwin

and evolution had been heard of. So the Gospel of John is full of allusions to beliefs and thoughts and methods of feeling that were current near the middle of the second century, but which nobody had heard of in the first century.

This, then, is the way in which the Gospels have come into the shape in which they exist to-day and have been transmitted to us. You will see, then,—and this is the only point I wish to emphasize,—you will see that we have no record of an eye-witness ; we have no writing of any single man of whose name we are certain : we have only the story as it was current in different branches, different divisions, of the early church during the latter part of the first and toward the middle of the second century. And there are such contradictions, such inconsistencies, in the reported teachings of Jesus, that we feel perfectly certain he could not have said all that is put into his mouth. And so the problem comes to us, you see, as a very serious one, how we are to find out just what he did teach.

Now I will give you two or three hints as to methods. Some of the best scholars in England have elaborated what is called the Triple Tradition. That is, they have gone so far as to pick out from Mark and Matthew and Luke the common story which is told by them all, eliminating that which Luke says alone, or Matthew says alone, or Mark says alone. For they said, If we can find that which Mark and Matthew and Luke all agree upon, we shall feel pretty certain of our ground,— just as, in common life, if you come across a story which is told by three persons, who all agree, you feel more certain of it than you do of a report which is based merely on the report of one person. Thus, then, has been elaborated this Triple Tradition ; and, while there is much in it, yet I am compelled to say that we cannot make it a safe or universal guide. It would indeed im-

poverish the story if we were reduced to that. In the Triple Tradition there is no record of any marvellous birth, no song of the angels, no trace whatever of Jesus' childhood; there is no physical resurrection, no story of the ascension; a large part of the miracles are gone; and not only that, but the Sermon on the Mount disappears, and the great majority of the wonderful parables. None of these things are in the Triple Tradition. And, then, you must remember that, while it is probable that three people are more likely to be right than one, when three agree, yet there are thousands of instances where three people are wrong and one person is right. So we cannot rely too much on that.

I wish now to hint to you what seem to me the principles which must guide us. In the first place, we must get back just as near to Jesus as we can. When a story passes from mouth to mouth, however honest may be the tellers of it, there is more and more probability all the time that it will change, the farther it gets from its source. This does not mean that any of the writers intended to falsify: it only means that the books were written by men characterized by the ordinary principles of human nature. If, for example, you should get three men together to-day, and tell them a common story, and then start them off, one to Europe, one to the South, and one to the Pacific Ocean, and let them, as they travelled from town to town and from city to city, repeat this story, you would have three stories by the time they reached the end of their journeys. At any rate, the stories would be very largely modified. And this probability, or certainty, would be intensified a thousand-fold if, instead of making the journey themselves, they should tell one man and let him go to the next town and tell another, and so pass it on from lip to lip across the continent. This is precisely the way in which the gospel story is told. We must, then, try to get just as near the source as we can.

Then, in the next place, we will acknowledge what force there is in the principle underlying the Triple Tradition: if we can find two or three or four persons testifying to the same thing, we shall feel somewhat more certain than if there were only one.

There is another principle which must guide us, and a very important one. We must be very careful in accepting as true those parts of the story which are plainly, evidently told under the bias of a preconceived idea.

Let me tell you what I mean. Matthew's Gospel was current chiefly among those who had been Jews before they became Christians: it was the Hebrew Gospel. The earliest church tradition tells us that it was originally written in Hebrew, although we know that cannot be true of our present Gospel, because it bears no marks of being a translation. But this tradition is worth something, and we know that Matthew's Gospel was written for the Jews. It had a distinct purpose running all through it; that is, the attempt, on the part of the writer, to convince the Jews that Jesus was really the Messiah for whom they had been looking so long. If you will pick up the Gospel of Matthew, and read it through, you will find finger-marks of this preconception all over it. You will recognize what I mean when I refer you to an illustration. Matthew will report some phrase which Jesus is said to have uttered or something which he did, and then he will add, "This he did" or "This he said, in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," so and so. In other words, he was all the time endeavoring to prove to the Hebrews out of their own accepted scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. He was under the bias of that preconception; and, when Jesus came to be accepted universally as the Messiah, do you not see how easy it was to reconstruct traditional facts and make

them fit the theory? And that Matthew was not accurate always in these references is apparent from the fact that sometimes he quotes supposed prophecies that do not exist, — so anxious, so zealous, was he to find reasons to convince his countrymen.

There is one other point, one other principle of guidance, which is very important; and this will help us, not in the negative, but in the positive way perhaps more than any of the others. If we come across a teaching attributed to Jesus which is so high, so fine, so spiritual, so peculiar, that we know it was away above and beyond the ordinary level of the thought of his age, we may feel practically certain that that is authentic. It would be perfectly easy for tradition to attribute to Jesus things which were in the popular mind; but the writers would not be likely to attribute to him ideas which were away ahead of the age. Take that famous saying in John. Jesus is reported to have said to the woman at the well in Samaria: "God is spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The time comes, and now is, when neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem will men worship the Father." Men who believed that Jerusalem was the only place where a man could acceptably worship,—men who believed, as we know the apostles did, all twelve of them, that a man could not be a Christian without being circumcised and becoming a Jew,—never would have dreamed of putting in the lips of their hero a saying which did away, completely and at one stroke, with any necessity for the Temple. We feel perfectly sure, then, that that saying must have originated with Jesus. So anywhere, when you find the highest, finest, most spiritual, and deepest things, those least in accord with the current tradition of the time, then you may feel practically certain that you are in possession of one of the genuine sayings of the Nazarene.

And now, at the end, I wish to note two or three principles that must govern us in interpreting the teachings of Jesus, when we have found them. For you will see, with a little thought, that it is not enough to feel sure that we have in hand a saying of Jesus: we need, then, to be sure that we understand it aright, that we are properly interpreting it. Two or three hints, then, as to the methods of interpretation. In the first place, we must remember that Jesus was an Oriental, and that figure of speech, parable, poetry, were the daily breath of the Oriental. Some of you will remember that when Mozoomdar, that famous member of the Brahmo-Somaj of India, was here, a few years ago, he said: "The trouble with you is that you do not know how to read Jesus. We Orientals understand him, but you make an Englishman of him." That was a statement of Mozoomdar; and it expresses one of the most important principles that we can bear in mind. When Jesus clothes a spiritual truth in some magnificent figure of speech, a parable, a poem, we straightway sit down and dissect it, take it to pieces as if it were a cold, scientific statement, and were to be weighed and judged in that manner. In that way, a hundred times, the parables are misinterpreted, as perhaps I shall have occasion to say during the course of these sermons.

And, then, there is another principle we must bear in mind; and that is that we have no right to put back into the first century ideas and thoughts and ways of looking at things which belong to the nineteenth. Mr. John Fiske has made very clear in his book, called "The Discovery of America," this principle as applied to Columbus. We know perfectly well, as we stop and think of it, that Columbus did not start out with the intention of discovering a new world. He had no idea of anything of the kind, and he died without its ever having entered into his head that he had done it. And

yet the current thought of to-day is full of such talk as puts back into the fifteenth century and into the mind of Columbus things which we have learned to know only four hundred years after his time. Now the same error we are constantly making concerning Jesus. He says something, and we interpret him in the light of the nineteenth century instead of in the light of the first. We must frame Jesus in the beliefs and habits of his age, and give him a background of the world that was around him, and judge him in the light of these.

And, then, in the last place, one more point. It is one of the commonest errors I know of. People are all the time going to the Bible, and getting a text for a purpose, and twisting out of it a meaning which the words, indeed, are capable of bearing, but which evidently is not the meaning of the writer. Now let us remember that the New Testament writers are to be understood as meaning, not anything which they can be made to mean by the ingenuity of an interpreter, but that they are to be understood as meaning what they had in mind when they wrote. And Jesus taught, not anything that you or I can twist out of his words: he taught what he meant when he uttered his words.

These, then, are the hints as to the principles that must govern us in seeking for the actual teaching of Jesus, and the other principles that must guide us in our methods of interpretation. So much as to the sources of our knowledge as to what Jesus actually taught.

THE MAN OF NAZARETH.

SOME three years ago, when I published my Catechism, I made the statement there that Jesus was born, not in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth. Immediately, though I supposed this to be a commonplace of critical scholarship, I was flooded with questions, personal and by letter, from different parts of the country. I was able to answer these questions only very imperfectly. I propose this morning, at the outset of this sermon, in treating of the Man of Nazareth, to give you, as briefly as possible, consistently with clearness, the reasons for supposing that Jesus was born in Nazareth.

If we had only the two Gospels of Mark and John, it would never have occurred to anybody to raise the question as to his being born anywhere else. You remember that Mark has no birth-story, does not say where he was born; but it is implied all the way through that he was born in Nazareth, and that Joseph and Mary were his father and mother. This is, I take it, because Mark is the oldest of the Gospels, and the cycle of myths that grew up around Jesus, after he had come to be regarded as the Messiah, had not taken shape. When we come to the Gospel of John, written nearly a hundred and fifty years after the birth of Jesus, we are dealing, not with a simple story of a life, but with a philosophical treatise. By this time Jesus had come to be

the eternal Logos,—the Logos of Plato and Philo, the Word, the utterance, the manifestation of the Divine; and, treated in that character, of course it is a matter of pure indifference as to where he was born. That is the reason, I take it, that John does not deal with the question in any way whatever. But now, when we come to Matthew and to Luke, the other two Gospels, we find the story of Jesus, having been born in Bethlehem. Why? For the simple reason, I will say in general, that he had come by this time to be looked on as the Jewish Messiah, the one foretold by the Prophets, the one who for so many years had been expected to come to restore the kingdom and the glory of David. Now, the Messiah, according to universal Jewish expectation, was, as I said, to give back the ancient glory of the kingdom as it was under David, who had come to be their typical king. He was, then, to be a descendant of David and his representative. The tradition, then, made it necessary that he should appear in the line of David, and be born in David's city, which was Bethlehem. Now note some of the peculiarities of the two stories, and see how impossible it is that they should both be true. Let us take Matthew, for example, and analyze what he says about it.

So far as Matthew is concerned, you would suppose that the family had always lived in Bethlehem. He says nothing whatever at the beginning about Nazareth. Jesus is born in Bethlehem. Then the Wise Men, having seen the star in the East, come to make their inquiries concerning him. Herod learns of the mission of these Wise Men, interviews them to find out where this Messiah is to be born, and they tell him "in Bethlehem." Then the Wise Men go and present their homage to the new-born king; but on their return they are warned by an angel not to tell Herod anything about it, so they go by another way and leave the

country. Herod then is angry ; and he sends out his soldiers and puts to death all the children in that whole region under two years of age. But before this occurred Joseph has been warned by an angel ; and he takes the child and its mother and flees into Egypt. After Herod's death an angel appears to him again, and tells him that it is safe to return to his own country. But, being timid, and thinking that possibly one of the sons or successors of Herod may be as cruel as the father was, instead of going into Herod's dominion, he turns north and goes to Nazareth, making that from that time forth his home,—a place that he had never, apparently, visited before.

Now let us look for a moment, and see what Luke has to say about it. Luke tells us that the home of Joseph and Mary was Nazareth. They had been living there, for nobody knows how long, according to the story of Luke ; but, under the necessity of having the prophecies fulfilled, and having the Messiah born in Bethlehem, some way must be devised by which these prophecies can be carried out. And so there comes the story of the enrolment as preparatory to taxing the people ; and it is said that Joseph was obliged to go to Bethlehem at this time, because he was of the line of David, and Bethlehem was his old home. And so this journey is made,—a journey of eighty long miles, with the means of travel such as you know existed at that time, over hill and valley, from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a journey made just before the birth of the wonderful child. After this, when the child becomes eight days old, they visit the temple, and then go back to Nazareth, their home. This is the story of Luke. There is nothing in Luke about Herod and the slaying of the innocents and the flight into Egypt. The two stories are utterly irreconcilable at every point ; and, if one of them is true, it is simply impossible for the other to be true.

Now mind you one thing, please: I do not wish for one moment to be understood as saying that the authors of the Gospels of Matthew or Luke intentionally departed from the truth. The Gospels came into their shape years after the events supposed to be narrated there; and this dominant idea as to what must have been the course of history, in order that the prophecies might be fulfilled and Jesus be the Jewish Messiah,—this was the controlling, shaping power, and under this power the stories grew up. In one part of the country and along one line of tradition the story of Matthew grew up; in another part of the country and along another line of tradition the story of Luke grew up. There is one thing that it will be a relief to all hearts, I know, to be able to dismiss; and that is that cruel story of Herod. Herod was not an ideal man, by any means. Possibly he was capable of a deed like this; but there is no sort of historical foundation for anything of the kind. In fact, Herod died, as far as we can find out, at just about the year in which Jesus was born.

Now let us note one or two of the characteristics of these stories. Take Luke, for example. There was no necessity whatever for Joseph's going to Bethlehem, even supposing the enrolment had taken place at that particular time; and we know from history that the enrolment did not take place at that time,—that is, that Luke is wrong in his dates. And, furthermore, even if it had been supposed necessary for Joseph to visit Bethlehem, there was no sort of necessity for Mary's going with him, particularly in the difficult conditions that then existed. As you look through the Gospels, you find that Jesus is always spoken of as "Jesus of Nazareth." When, in John's tradition, for example, Nathaniel says to Philip, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip does not reply, as he naturally would if

he knew that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "This good thing did not come out of Nazareth, it came out of Bethlehem." He simply says, "Come and see," accepting the idea that it did come out of Nazareth. It is one of those cases of a mythical story growing up years after the fact, a story shaped by the Messianic expectation, and which must have occurred so, as the writer supposed, in order that the prophecies might have been fulfilled.

Jesus, then, was born at Nazareth about four years — we are not precise as to the date — before the year 1 A.D. Nazareth is now a town of about three or four thousand inhabitants. Perhaps at that time it was substantially the same size, for things change little in the East. It was one of those common Syrian or Palestinian towns located at the upper end of a ravine which ended with the mountain summits that closed in the northern end of the Valley of Esdraelon. It was one of those common towns, as I have said; and the home of Jesus was a common home,—one of those cubic houses of stone, with no windows, one door, with a mat, a few cushions in the way of furniture, a few earthen jars or dishes of one kind and another, a painted chest,—kitchen, sleeping-room, workshop, all in one. For the father of Jesus was a carpenter; and in this room he carried on his daily work. In the centre of the town was the fountain where Mary with the other women would meet to get water and talk over the little affairs of their little world. Not much, probably, was to be seen from the house of Jesus; but, by ascending the hill not far away, going up to the summit of the mountain, a magnificent panorama spread out before his childish vision,—the mountains to the west, the north, the east, the great plain of Esdraelon at the south. In one direction he could look over and almost fancy that he heard the Mediterranean Sea: in the other

direction he could look through an opening in the mountains down into the valley of the Jordan. And this was then an idyllic country, beautiful as one cannot imagine it, as he visits the scenes as they are to be witnessed to-day,—a country vine-clad, a country of the fig, of the olive, a country of grass and flowers, a beautiful garden like the dreamed Eden itself.

This, then, was the scene of the childhood of Jesus. He undoubtedly grew up to work with his father, the carpenter,—we are expressly told that he did,—at his trade. It is supposed that, during some years of the period before his public life began, he lived at Capernaum, because Capernaum is once spoken of as “his own city,” as though the residence of the family at that time had been changed. We see only one trace of him during his childhood, though it is probable that he went up to the temple more times than one with his father, as the family proceeded thither to the ancient festivals of their people. At the age of twelve, it is said, he was taken with his father and mother to the temple. It is a beautiful picture that we see of the young boy, precocious in his thoughtfulness and wisdom, discussing the great questions of the Jewish law with the doctors in the temple. I wish to call your attention to one curious bit of unconscious testimony that we have here as to the simple humanity of Jesus. The next day, as they are on their way home, Joseph and Mary learn that Jesus is not in the little caravan; and they become alarmed and go back in search of him, and it is on this occasion that they find him in the temple with the doctors. And Mary says to him, in the way of reprimand or reproof: “Do you not know that your father and I have been seeking you, sorrowing? Why have you done this thing?” Not “Joseph and myself,” but “your father and I” have been looking for you. And note: if Joseph and

Mary had known ever since he was born, as the angels are reported to have told them over and over again, that this child was a supernatural being, the second person in the eternal Trinity, think of the strange inconsistency, absurdity even, of their being alarmed about him, as though he could not take care of himself over one night. This story, then, undoubtedly belongs to that part of the tradition which came into existence before the theory of his supernatural birth had grown up.

We see nothing, then, of Jesus' childhood, except this one little glimpse ; and next he appears, at about the age of thirty, at the baptism of John in the Jordan, submitting himself, in accordance with the custom of his people, to this rite. And then he starts out to preach. "The kingdom of God is at hand,"—this was the gospel, the glad tidings, to which he henceforth devoted himself, and to the proclamation of which he called his disciples and followers. The significance of this I shall treat by and by, when we reach it in its order. I must pass it by, then, for the present.

His public life, according to the Gospel of John, which is least reliable of all in this matter, was about three years and a half. According to the other three Gospels, it was probably about fifteen months,—only a year and a quarter. During this time he goes up and down Galilee preaching, in the fields, by the lakeside, on the mountains, visiting the sick and the sorrowing and the troubled, going about everywhere doing good, and proclaiming "The kingdom of God is at hand," and at last "The kingdom of God is begun, it is among you." This is his great proclamation. For a year or more he goes up and down this little country of Galilee. His travels take him beyond the borders of Judea and Galilee and Samaria,—that is, Palestine,—so far as we know, only once. Once he is reported to have gone across the borders

into the region of the city of Cæsarea Philippi, which is at the north-east of Palestine. With that exception, he never crossed the border of his little country, which is hardly larger than the State of Massachusetts.

Towards the end of his ministry he visits Jerusalem, to see what effect the proclamation of this new gospel will have at the seat of his country's ancient and historic religion. And here, of necessity, he comes into conflict with the established and instituted order of things. For, if that which he preached as the gospel of the kingdom of God was true, then there was no need any longer of Moses, no need any longer of ritual, no place any longer for the temple. For, if God were not to be worshipped in the temple nor in one place or another, but was spirit, to be worshipped anywhere by those who worshipped him in spirit and in truth, then the temple service was outworn, and was to pass away. This, to the minds and conviction of his people, was the worst of all possible crimes. To speak against the temple, to a Jew of that time, meant to speak against Moses, to speak against God, to speak against the law, to speak against the one only hope of the race. For the race at that time was concentrating its whole heart, attention, enthusiasm, on keeping the law ever and ever more strictly, as the one condition in accordance with which they believed their deliverance was to come.

It was easy, then, for the Jewish leaders, though they had not the power of life and death, to see that the disturber was put out of the way. It was only necessary for somebody,—I do not charge it on any one in particular; I do not charge it to any leaders; I do not know who did it; it may have been some popular rumor,—it was easy enough for somebody to whisper to the Roman authorities that here was a man who set up as king, who threatened a popular uprising,

a rebellion, a disturbance against the authority of the Cæsars. Time and again a similar thing had happened. Jesus was not the first one who had led a revolt or was supposed to be ready to lead a revolt, and who had been put out of the way. Jesus, then, comes in conflict with the Jewish Sanhedrim, with the Roman authorities; and, as the result of it, on that Friday afternoon, outside the city walls, he is hung upon the cross, and the end has come.

So meagre, so simple, are the outlines of all that we know historically as to the life of Jesus of Nazareth. I wish now to say one or two words in regard to the education of Jesus. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" some one asks concerning him; and, in fact, in the ordinary sense of education, he had never learned. What kind of school did Jesus attend, think you? The ordinary Jewish school of that time was simply the school of the rabbi, the school of the reader in the synagogue, who taught what? Taught the traditional history of the people and the sayings of the fathers. He learned, probably, to read and to write; and this was all. Concerning any wider kind of education there is no trace of his having any knowledge. He spoke Aramaic, a mixture of Hebrew, which had become a dead language, and the Syriac: this was his popular speech. We do not even know whether he knew enough of Hebrew to read the Old Testament in the original. He did not know anything of Greek, he knew little, probably, of the vast empire of the Cæsars, he knew nothing of the history of the world outside that of his own people. There is no trace about him of the scientist, no touch of the philosopher, none of the logical thinker. We must look for the greatness of Jesus and the secret of his power in some other direction than these. There was one thing, however, that we must remember about him: there are some supreme geniuses in the

world who seem to have the ability to absorb, not knowledge in the technical and text-book sense of that word, but all the wisdom of their time ; and Jesus was one of these. Some one has said that talent belongs to the man who can do great things with effort, but that the genius is the man who can do great things with perfect ease. And, without any apparent effort, Jesus drank in the wisdom of his age.

We must note one thing which is important. One of the great things which Jesus did was to speak words, to utter a spirit, which, in the hands of Paul, became the great power to break down barriers of race, and create a religion capable of running over the whole world. I have said that Jesus probably lived for a while at Capernaum. At any rate, he visited that city often. This lay on the north-west end of the Lake of Gennesaret, or Sea of Tiberias, as it is variously called ; and the point I wish you to note is that it was on the line of one of the great thoroughfares of trade, over which the caravans passed from the West to Damascus and the East. So Jesus came in contact here, as would not have been true if he had lived in Judea, not only with Jews, but he met the Samaritan, he met the Arab, he met the Persian, he met the Greek, he met people of all tribes and tongues, passing along this great highway of trade. And so perhaps he got a hint of that broader view which to him made all men, and not Jews only, children of the one Father who is in heaven.

And, then, Jesus had that poetic ability which gave him wisdom, as he caught the insight, the glimpse of truth from the commonest things all about him. Everything in earth and sky, all the common daily occupations of men, spoke to him. And he knew men intuitively ; he knew life ; he knew the hearts, the thoughts, the aspirations, of his age, as no school learning, no drilling at the feet of Gamaliel or in any

Greek Academy, could ever have conferred it upon him. In this sense, then, was he educated.

Do we know anything of his personal appearance? Just a word here: we must say simply, Nothing whatever, except that, so far as we know, he was a Jew, and probably had all the characteristics of the Jewish race. The pictures of him that have been common in the history of the Church are undoubtedly the grossest caricatures, especially those which represent him as emaciated and sad and suffering. The life of Jesus, until the very last, was not a sad life. That year in Galilee was an idyllic year,—a year of gayety and gladness. He was not an ascetic: he attended wedding feasts, he sat with publicans at their festivals, he entered into all the merry-making and gayety of his time, he was a wine-drinker. He did not put from him any of the joyousness and the gladness of the common people. We must think of him, then, not as weighted down with the world's sorrows, but as glad as no man could fail to be who had that magnificent trust in God which he ever carried in his heart.

Now I must turn to that which is the more important part of my theme, the immensely difficult task of trying to suggest to you what I cannot outline or describe, those things wherein resided the secret of his power, the mental, moral, spiritual characteristics of the Man of Nazareth. Remember one thing, friends: some great power was there eighteen hundred years ago to change the face of the civilization of the world. Great results do not come from nothing. I expect to fall short of picturing his greatness; and we must remember that his disciples in themselves did that. You may think of him as a greater, grander, truer, sweeter man than the disciples made him. For one of the principal characteristics of their work was the fact that they perpetually misunderstood, misconceived, misrepresented him.

First of all stands out in the life of Jesus the fact, perhaps unequalled anywhere else in the history of the world, of what I can best call the God-consciousness of the man. His life, his thought, his feeling, was saturated, so to speak, with God. God, to him, was not any far-off being, in the heavens or in the past, but the Father, ever present, closer to him than his heart-beat. He had only to whisper, and he felt that he was in closest personal communion with God. God in the morning and evening sky, God in the grass, in the lilies, God in human life about him, God in everything he saw and everything he touched, God everywhere; the horizon, the sky of his life, shining with the unshadowed face of his Father,—this was his main inspiration and his power. He believed that with God everything was possible, and, if this or that did not occur in accordance with his wishes, it was only because his Father had some wiser plan for him. When at last he prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from his lips, he never doubted for an instant, when the cup was pressed with insistent force upon him, that it was because it was his Father's will; and his answer was, "Thy will, not mine, be done." This God-consciousness of the man let us place in the forefront of his life.

Next, an enthusiastic love for man,—not love for the Jew, not love for his friends, not love for his neighbors, but love for humanity. He taught the Jews, in the face of their prejudices and traditions, that the Samaritan could be the truest neighbor. He said: "Thou hast heard that it hath been said of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemy, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Why? "That you may be like God, children of your Father. He makes no distinction: he sends his rain on the bad as well as on the good, his sun shines on

the unjust as impartially as on the just. Love, then, the weak; love the outcast; love your bitterest enemy. Do not dare to be, or aim to be, less perfect than your Father who is in heaven." This was the kind of love which filled his heart; and it is this, working in the hearts of his Church, that has at last broken all barriers, and turned Christianity into what it is to-day in its wider interpretation,—a universal, eternal, ethical, spiritual kingdom of truth and love.

There was another characteristic of Jesus,—an indefinable personal fascination. He seemed to attract to himself every one with whom he came in contact. Why I do not know. We are often able to observe such facts in other lives in history. You remember the quatrain,—

"I do not like thee, Doctor Fell.
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this alone I know full well,
I do not like thee, Doctor Fell."

And so we can turn it around, and find that a man is loved, loved by everybody who comes within the circle of his influence. Why? Can you answer in any other way than to speak of the fascination of his personal power? You know there are men in public life who draw hearts after them as a magnet draws steel. Nobody can tell why. There is another man with equal intellect, perhaps greater, with a power to state principles, with a power to logically argue out a case, who has no personal following. If men follow him at all, it is because they are argued into it from a sense of duty. There are others who sweep over the world, and sway the multitudes simply by personal contact. Jesus was one of them.

And, then, there was about him not only the fascination of his personality: there was a charm of speech. I do not say

it has never been equalled, but the record of it makes us wonder as to whether it has ever been surpassed. The common people flocked after him, and heard him gladly. The charm of his speech lay in his personal magnetism and power. For you will remember — and you will discover this as I go on in this course of sermons — Jesus taught almost nothing which was new or original. The Golden Rule was the common property of the civilized world. Jesus did not originate it. The saying that the whole law hung on the two commandments, love to God and love to man, had been stated by Hillel fifty years before. There is hardly a saying of Jesus in the Gospels anywhere which, so far as ethical or spiritual teaching is concerned, was new. The power of Jesus was not, then, in the fact that he uttered startling, sensational, new ideas that the people ran after. It was the charm of his power of expression. I cannot define it. Whitefield, for example, to take a poor illustration, was one of the mightiest preachers that this world has ever seen. Multitudes flocked after him, so that no place was large enough to hold the people who wanted to hear him. And yet he has not left behind him one single idea or thought that the world will ever care to keep. His power was not in what he said. It was in the charm of his personal presence and speech. Jesus had this charm in a most wonderful way, as is shown by the fact that he has made Palestine the home of the imagination, not of one people, but of every civilized people in the world. Walter Scott and Burns were able to touch the bare hills of Scotland, mist-covered, the vales, the lakes, the spots historic or beautiful,—able to touch them into poetry, so that we visit them, not for what they are in themselves, but for what Scott or Burns helps us to see. So, in a more wonderful way still, Jesus touched all common life — every hill, valley, spring, lake, the one river of Pales-

tine — into poetry and life, as is true of no other country on the face of the earth. Every common occupation,—the women at the mill, the woman kneading the leaven into the dough, the sower scattering his grain in the field, the fishermen in their boats, drawing in their nets and separating the good fish from the bad,—all these common things; the red sky of evening or morning, the clouds, the grass, the lilies of the field clothed more gorgeously than Solomon,—he touched all these things until they live and speak to the world with ethical, spiritual meanings such as no other man in history has been able to put into the common things of life.

One other characteristic of Jesus I wish now to speak of, or one other thing attributed to him. Did he work miracles? There are those who tell us that it was because of his supernatural power over the ordinary facts of the world that he accomplished so much. Frankly, for one, I must tell you that I do not believe that he, or anybody else, ever worked a miracle. Undoubtedly, Jesus did have, perhaps had in a very large degree, a power which thousands of others have possessed before his day and since, a power of personal influence, a power that we call magnetic because we do not know what else to call it, a power of calming those nervously excited or half insane, a power of accomplishing wonderful effects by his touch.

It was believed by the Jews at this time that all lunacy was caused by the presence of demons who had taken possession of the man. It was believed that most diseases were magical, and produced by some such method as this. Jesus had the power, as they believed, of casting out these devils; that is, the people who were wild and lunatic became calm in his presence, and sat at his feet clothed and in their right mind. Others, as I said, before his day and since, have

possessed a similar power. The power of mind over body extends even to life and death. The stories of the *stigmata*,—that is, the stories you will find concerning some of the saints in the Catholic Church, of a person's having the signs of the passion of Christ, the sores bleeding in the hands and feet and in the side, produced purely by mental power,—these stories undoubtedly, in some cases, are true. I have known of a case in this country within a year. I speak of this simply to show that the power of the mind over the body, under certain conditions, is almost boundless. Jesus undoubtedly possessed in a marvellous degree this power; but there was nothing supernatural about it. In regard to the other miracles, or reported miracles, perhaps they may have grown out of figures of speech. We know not how they grew. The waters on which he walked may have been the turbulence of the people, or may have been the floods of distress and sorrow that he was able to calm. The opening the eyes of the blind may have been the morally blind. The ears of the deaf may have been the morally deaf. We do not know. I only offer these as hints. We cannot be called upon rationally to explain the working of a miracle, because a miracle is not rational, and cannot be rationally explained. But similar stories, myths, legends sprung out of nothing except the pictorial imaginations of the people, are in the world in every age; and they have tracked the steps of all great spiritual leaders. They have followed the historical line of the Church's growth. They exist here in Boston to-day,—stories as utterly without foundation and as utterly unaccountable as any that we find in the New Testament. To my mind it is not wonderful that in that age, when there was no thought of science or natural order,—not wonderful that those stories sprang up. A man, undoubtedly, would not have been regarded as Mes-

siah, or had any popular power, unless he had been able to work miracles ; for miracles were in the air. The world was a scene not of order, but of miracle. The people expected it ; and what they expected they supposed they saw.

Jesus was not all gentleness. He could be stern, he could be severe. It is brought up against him sometimes by captious critics that he showed anger and temper on certain occasions. He could flame out like a flash of lightning against hypocrisy in high places, against pretentious goodness that displayed itself on the streets for the praise of men. But mark one thing : all the sternness, all the severity of Jesus, are directed against these, for the sake of definition, called spiritual sins. He is severe against the hypocrite, against the pretender, against the rich man who treads down the poor, against those who take advantage of the weaknesses of their fellow-men. But this great severity, on the one hand, is offset by an infinite tenderness for the weak, for the tempted, for the poor, for those in any trouble or distress, the unfortunate in no matter what direction. And it is very striking to me — though I cannot go into the discussion of it — that for what we might call the fleshly sins, the sins to which we are naturally tempted, drawn away by the weakness of our own constitution,—for these he has only words of tenderness, compassion, and healing. It is for the sins of the powerful, for spiritual pride, for the oppressor, for the hypocrite, that he keeps all the lightning of his wrath.

One other characteristic of Jesus, one as important, perhaps, in its way as any of the others, was that he was an extreme idealist. Facts were as nothing to him. He believed — he put it in a figure of speech — that faith could say to this mountain, "Be thou uprooted, and be thou cast into the sea," and it should be done. The power of the Cæsars, the might of the world's empire, he counted as nothing. That God,

that Father, who wrought the stubborn earth out of chaos and made it habitable for man, held all the facts of the earth and human history as plastic clay in his hand, to be shaped into whatever he would. He had this enthusiastic ideal trust in God that took no account, as I said, of realities that stood in the way of the domain of his ideal,—the ideal of this kingdom of God. The putting down of injustice, the upholding of the poor and the weak,—that was the thing, the one great thing that ought to be. And in a world where God was all it was the great thing that should be ; and facts could never appall him or stand in his way. And, then, to this magnificent ideal he consecrated himself — as, indeed, others have done before and since — in life and in death with an utter consecration. This kingdom of God was the one thing. I take it that in the light of this we must interpret some of those phrases which seem to us a little harsh on the surface. Some one comes to him, and says, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak to thee." He says: "Who are my mother and my brethren? He who does the will of God, helps to build this kingdom, they are mothers and brothers to me." A disciple whom he called says: "Let me first go and bury my father." Jesus says, "Let the dead bury their dead, but come thou and preach the kingdom of God." All human ties, life itself, must give way to this devotion to the ideal, the kingdom of God that he had come to set up.

Now, at the end, one or two hints. I know, better than any of you can tell me, how utterly inadequate is this picture I have attempted to draw of the Man of Nazareth. Is any one saying, "Is it possible that a great world-wide religion was created by a man no greater, no more wonderful than this picture?" Remember, first, that I do not claim to have painted him adequately. And, then, remember next that

he came in the fulness of time,—that God and human history conspired with him to produce these magnificent and world-wide results. The ages were ready for him! The religion of the Hebrews had come to its culmination, as far as it could go along those lines. Greece and Rome had seen their gods decay and pass out of the people's ken: they were already importing new deities and new religions from the East, feeling the inadequacy of their old ideas. The world was ready for Jesus, so that, coming in the fulness of time, and speaking these words and doing these deeds, he became the centre around which could crystallize all the mighty world-wide forces and tendencies and dreams. You know that, when a mass is ready to crystallize, it takes but the tiniest thing in the world to produce the mighty result. You know that sometimes, on the summit of a mountain, a spring starts up; and a child's finger can determine as to whether it shall flow as a mighty river to the East or the West, towards the Atlantic or towards the Pacific.

Some years ago you remember that they prepared to remove the rocks which impeded navigation in New York Harbor. They made their preparations, they put in their explosives, the train was laid, everything was ready; and a little girl, the child of the engineer, touched the button which exploded all the rocks of Hell Gate, and opened the harbor to the commerce of the world. The touching of this button would have produced a very slight effect, had not everything been prepared for it. You know that sometimes, in the mountains, the snow has gathered on the summits, but it is so firmly fixed that the thunder of a cannonade would not disturb it; again, the conditions are such that the indiscreet whisper of a climber starts the snow in motion, and the avalanche thunders down into the valley, and that part of the world is never the same again. They tell us that they are

getting ready to have a descendant of Columbus, a little child in Italy, touch the button that shall start into activity all the mighty mechanism of the World's Fair at Chicago. Think not, then, alone of the power, the character, the words, of Jesus. Remember that Jesus came at the crisis of the ages, that he came in the fulness of time, and that the universe was at his back and God was by his side. And so that which might have fallen unheeded — a word to turn into an echo and be lost — is becoming the glad tidings of all people, proclaiming the love universal, the infinite mercy of God, and the brotherhood of the race, without limit of color, condition, or creed.

THE WORLD OF JESUS, SEEN AND UNSEEN.

IN the first sermon of this series I had occasion to remind you of a point which ought never to be forgotten,—that we are in constant danger of misunderstanding the past, its teachers and its thinkers, because we are constantly and unconsciously importing into the past our modern ideas, our modern knowledge, things which the people of that time had not even dreamed of. I used, to illustrate that, the recent discussion concerning Columbus, and reminded you that people are continually speaking of him as though he started out with the purpose of discovering a new world,—a thing that had never entered into his wildest imagination. Precisely the same principle needs to be kept in mind, and all the more, concerning Jesus, because his teachings are so much more important, they have so much larger influence on our thinking and our living. We ought, then, to be able to understand something of the point of view which Jesus occupied.

To illustrate the kind of error we are constantly falling into, let me refer to a very common case. When you read that verse in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," the chances are that nine persons out of ten, at any rate, unconsciously take it for granted that the writer was referring to the Bible when he says "thy word," because we have become accustomed in the modern world to refer to the Bible as the Word of God. But, if you stop to think of it a moment, in the most super-

ficial way, you will see that nothing of the kind can possibly have been true. The New Testament then was not in existence ; a large part of the Old Testament even had not been written ; and those parts that had been written were not gathered into a book. There was no book at that time that was spoken of as the "Word of God." In this way, then, we are constantly importing into the past our modern thoughts, our modern ideas, and so misinterpreting the teachings that have come down to us from those old days.

To come now to the matter of Jesus in special. When Jesus refers to a publican,— he makes the point of one of his sharpest sayings turn upon the use of that word,— we need at least to know what a publican was. If he speaks of a Pharisee, we must know what a Pharisee was. So, in a larger sense, when Jesus speaks of the end of the world, we are not to suppose that he had in mind this globe that we live on. It had never occurred to him to think of a globe. Neither did he have in mind the destruction of this earth, however he conceived it. When Jesus speaks of heaven, we must not think of our modern heaven, peopled not only with God and angels, but with the good people of all ages ; for Jesus had no such conception of heaven as that. So, when he speaks of hell, we have no right to import into the ideas of Jesus thoughts concerning hell which are the product of modern speculation, and which were not in existence in his time.

You see, then, do you not, how important it is, if we are at all to comprehend the mighty Nazarene, if we are at all to understand what he believed and what he taught, and the power of his teaching over the world of that time and over the modern world, we must at least try to get his point of view, and understand what he meant by the language which he used? I am to undertake, then, this morning the immensely difficult task — a task in carrying out which I know

I shall only partially succeed — of resurrecting the world of Jesus, enabling you to take his point of view and look out upon the heavens and the earth as he looked at them, so that you will be able henceforth to understand a little better what he meant by this phrase or that reference, or another manner of speaking.

First, then, let us try, as best we may imaginatively, to re-create the universe in which Jesus lived and walked and taught. We have learned in these later days to think of this earth as a globe, whirling on its axis and spinning about the sun. We have learned to think of this solar system of ours, with its many planets, with the moons around those planets, until, when we say "universe," this image, all this picture, naturally comes into our minds. And we know that this is only the beginning, that this solar system of ours is perhaps one of the lesser ones that swing in and sweep through space. We know that we are a little fleet of planets, with the sun for admiral, sailing this blue deep, almost isolated and alone. For, though we look up into the sky and those bright points seem so thick and close together, we know that they are millions on millions of miles apart, and that our little system is so far from our next-door neighbor that it takes their light, that sweeps with inconceivable rapidity, three years and a half to reach us. We know that there are suns so far away that it takes light thousands of years to cross the space that divides them from us. And when we have counted up these thousands, these millions of suns that we think of as the centres of groups of worlds and moons, as our sun is, we know, then, that we are only on the threshold, and thought sweeps on and on until imagination itself droops and is weary. And yet we know that we cannot reach any limit to space; for beyond any imaginary limit space still goes on. This is the kind of universe

in which we are at home. But do you ever stop to think how very, very modern it is? It is only about four hundred years old. Go back to the time of Copernicus, and you will find that the mass of the people imagined the universe as a tiny play-house affair compared with what we know to-day to be true. The whole universe, in the popular imagination four hundred years ago, was not so large as we know our solar system at present to be,—perhaps not larger than the orbit of the moon. Ptolemy's system, which reigned over the learned world for hundreds of years, represented the earth as fixed at the centre, and that as surrounded by solid, concentric, crystal spheres, to which were attached, first, the moon, then the sun, then the planets in their order; and all those that we call the fixed stars, because they seem to us to keep still,—though nothing is ever still,—these were supposed to be attached to the outermost sphere, and all to be in the same plane,—that is, to be equally distant from the earth at the centre. This was the kind of conception that reigned over civilized Europe for hundreds of years. But we must leave the grandeur and magnificence of that behind us before we come to the universe of Jesus. Let us go back, then, to some of the earliest thought of the Old Testament. And here is a curious illustration of the principle with which I began. You read those Old Testament references, and you instinctively put into them your modern meanings. It never occurs to you to get the meaning out of them which they had to the ordinary Jewish reader of that day. What, then, did the Jews believe in old times? They believed that the earth was simply a flat surface, anchored, perhaps, in the midst of an all-surrounding ocean. This is a statement which you will find in the Old Testament,—the earth anchored, fixed, in the midst of all-surrounding waters. And the sky is called a firmament; that is, it was a solid dome, some-

times compared to a dome beaten out of copper by the coppersmiths, fastened down at the four corners of the earth. Or it is spoken of as a tent cover ; but, in any case, it was supposed to be a solid dome, and the waters were divided, part of them here on the earth making seas and oceans, and part of them above the firmament. This is the statement of the writer of Genesis. And, when it rains, it means simply that windows, little sluiceways, were opened in this solid dome, and the waters that are above there are permitted to come down through. The earth being thus anchored in the midst of the waters, you can very easily understand how natural might have been the belief in a flood. All that was needed was to turn loose those tremendous reservoirs above the firmament, and the highest mountains would soon be covered.

The universe, then, in the time of Jesus was substantially this sort of affair. It was an oblong square, made after the pattern of the tabernacle in the wilderness. And in the first thought of the Jews with which we come in contact there are only two departments to it: there is this earth where we live ; and, then, above, the dome where God and his angels are. There was no underworld in the earlier Hebrew thought, because they had no belief in any future life. By the time of Jesus, however, the belief in a future life had grown up: so there was this underworld, or under-story, so to speak, of the universe. But you can see how tiny an affair this universe was,—very small, very comprehensible,—this little flat surface, the ocean surrounding it on every side, the solid dome closing it in, down to the far-off horizon ; and, just above the dome, heaven, God, and his celestial court ; and, just beneath the surface of the earth, the cavernous underworld. This was the universe of Jesus.

Let us come now to speak a little more particularly of the earth. For in the old writers "the world" generally

means what we mean by "the universe": "the earth" and "the world" are not identical. What, then, was Jesus' idea of the earth? I have indicated it to you in part already. But we are not to think that these are strange, incomprehensible ideas. It has taken the world thousands of years to discover the nature of this solar system of ours, and of the other systems that swing and shine above our heads. What else should people think? Suppose you waked up for the first time, without any teaching or inherited knowledge of any kind, and tried to find out about the moon and the sun and the stars? They appear very small and a very little way off. It was not at all unreasonable in those days that people should look upon an eclipse as the moon or sun being swallowed by some celestial monster: it does not look to the naked eye too large to be thus swallowed, and they had only their naked eyes with which to judge. We are not, then, I say, to import into that far-off time our ideas, and think that people were strange or unreasonable or foolish because they could hold such childish beliefs. What else but childish conceptions do you expect to find in the childhood of the world?

The earth of the ancients was sometimes a flat surface, circular, supported on twelve pillars. Another Hindu conception was that the earth rested on the back of a tortoise. They could not understand how it could keep in its place unless it had some support. Plato, the divine Plato,—what sort of idea did he have of the earth? I speak of this, that you may not think that the Jewish ideas were peculiar and curious. Plato imagined that a cube was the perfect figure, and it was appropriate and proper that the earth should be a perfect figure; and so he reasoned that probably the earth was a solid cube, with the inhabitants living simply on the upper side of it. We are not, then, to sup-

pose that the Jews were peculiar and strange in their ideas. Their conceptions were fully abreast of the best imaginations of the ancient world.

What did Jesus know about the nations that inhabited the earth? In the Jewish idea, clear down to the time of Jesus, it was supposed that there were just seventy nations in the world. You will find a trace of this in the fact that Jesus is reported to have chosen seventy disciples and sent them out to preach the gospel everywhere,—the number seventy, because it was supposed that there were just seventy different peoples and different languages. Jesus had no idea of the Roman Empire, of the history of Greece, of Babylon or Persia: they were names, traditions to him. He only knew of these people as, first or last, having come in contact in some way with the Jews; but he had no knowledge of the earth. When Jesus speaks of "the nations," we are not to think of even the nations that the Jews were then familiar with, but of those supposititious seventy peoples who lived in different parts of the earth.

We need to note, right here, one or two things connected with the actual facts of the age, not its dreams or imaginations, in order that we may understand the world in which Jesus lived and walked. What was the condition of it politically? Judea, Galilee, the different parts of Palestine, were only Roman provinces. They were subject to that mighty empire which had its seat on the Tiber. And the Jews were naturally restive under this domination of a foreign power. They hated its tyranny; and everything that represented it in any way was not only distasteful to them as a sign of their subjection, but they believed that they represented the enemies of their God, though that God had somehow mysteriously permitted them to be subject for a time to these foreign powers.

What was the condition at that time as to rich and poor,—for we frequently misinterpret Jesus' talk about charity because we forget or do not understand this. Most of the common people in Palestine were what we should call very, very poor. The country had been swept from east to west by wars ; and, at the present time, as I said, it was under the power of Rome. And how did Rome govern her distant provinces? She sent out, perhaps, an impoverished nobleman, a man who on his dissipations had scattered his fortune: he gets an appointment from the Cæsar to rule some foreign province, and he goes there for two or three years, and comes back again with another fortune to squander in the capital. How does he raise that fortune? By extortion and exaction of every kind from the people. He delegates, or farms out, the business of tax-gathering ; and the man who collects the taxes of a certain district is free to grind out of the people the very last penny that he can get, by one means or another, and keep for himself that part of it which he does not turn over to his superior. So he turned over the stipulated sum there were no questions asked as to how much else he had collected. You can see, then, what were the opportunities for the common people to gather wealth. If a man was known to have wealth, it was taken away from him. It is in a condition of things like this, you see,—and how natural it appears!—that Jesus speaks of a treasure hid in a field, which a man discovers accidentally. Some man had buried his treasure, so that the exactors could not take it away from him. Perhaps he had suddenly died ; and the fact that it had ever been buried there had been lost, so that it belonged to any ordinary finder. These teachings of Jesus, you see, spring naturally out of this condition of affairs ; and his whole doctrine of charity, of indiscriminate giving, belongs to that condition of society, and not at all to the con-

dition of the present age in which we live. That time, then, was divided into the rich and the poor; and, when Jesus hurls his thunders indiscriminately against the rich,—speaking of the rich almost always and without exception as evil,—you are to understand that in that age and at that time it was almost universally true. The fact that a man was rich was only another way of saying that he had robbed the people. When you read, then, Jesus' thunders against the rich, remember that he was speaking of the condition of things which existed at that time.

Then there were the parties into which the people were divided. We read of the Sadducees: who were they? They were the conservative party, the extreme conservatives. They held to the doctrine of Moses. They did not believe in any spirits or in the future life, because the belief in spirits and a future life was a new-fangled idea which had sprung up in modern times; and they held by the old ideas. Who were the Pharisees? The Pharisees, in spite of Jesus' denunciations of them, were probably, on the whole, the better part of the people. They were the great patriotic party, the one which believed in nationalism, the one which tried to save the country and lead it on to a successful future. But they believed that the way to do this was exactly and scrupulously to keep the letter of Moses; and, in their scrupulous desire to keep the minutæ of the Mosaic law, they sometimes, as Jesus charged them with doing, forgot that kindness and truth were more important than ritual. The Pharisees, then, were so anxious to keep the Mosaic law that they forgot deeds of goodness; and it is no wonder—the same has been true in every age, and will be while human nature remains what it is—that some of them took on airs of special sanctity, and so became the types of hypocrisy in every age.

What was the industrial condition of the age? In the time of Jesus there were occupations, manufactures, of many kinds, though not quite in the modern sense. Palestine was a fertile country, from which many products were exported into other lands. Let me read a few sentences from a book recently published in England :—

“Wool from the downs beyond the Jordan was woven into rich stuffs in the looms of Phœnicia ; the linen manufacture could compete with that of the valley of the Nile ; and balsam for embalming the dead, and the fragrant storax for incense in the temples, were likewise favorite articles of traffic. The Egyptian monuments as early as 1700 B.C. show us how important was the trade with Canaan. Corn, wine, oil, honey, and dates were all exported to the South.

“The Jews acquired by degrees a knowledge of trades as well ; they opened mines for iron and copper ; with the help of the Phœnicians, they learned the arts of building ; they were carpenters, smiths, masons ; they made beautiful furniture, costly vessels, embroidered robes, fine jewels, musical instruments.

“At the time of Jesus the different trades had formed themselves into guilds, such as carpenters or fullers. In some of them the members were pledged to mutual help.”

To such an extent were these industries carried on that to be engaged in some sort of practical work was regarded as one of the chief virtues of the Jewish character : they taught that the man who did not bring up his boy to a trade brought him up to be a thief. And yet, in spite of all this, the people, as I have said, were poor, struggling hard for a livelihood.

This, then, is the kind of world, so far as little hints can suggest it to you, politically, industrially, socially, into the midst of which Jesus was born. So much for a hint as to the world of Jesus, seen. We need now to turn to the other

side. For all of us live not alone in a visible world: the world you and I inhabit stretches far beyond the limits of anything we can see, and by belief and imagination we live in worlds invisible. What was this invisible world of Jesus? In other words, what did he believe about heaven, about hell, about invisible forces and powers, so far as they relate to human life? We need especially to understand this, because so large a part of the teaching of Jesus concerned itself with this order of ideas.

What was the heaven of Jesus? When we speak of heaven to-day, we think of a place where God is,—that is, the popular mind always recurs to that,—but a place where not only God is, and where the angels have their home, but it is a place where all the good people of all ages have gone. Of course, who the inhabitants are, to any particular person, will depend upon that person's belief as to the conditions of admission there. But heaven is not only a place where God is, and his angels, but it is full of the saved. Now remember, when Jesus spoke of heaven, he had no most distant idea of any such picture as that. Heaven, to Jesus, was simply the court of the celestial king, the palace of his Father. God was there, and innumerable angels: but there were only two members of the human race who, up to that time, had ever entered its gates. The Jews of the time of Jesus never dreamed of anybody as being in heaven,—any men,—except Enoch and Elijah; these two had been translated, without the necessity of dying, and by the special favor of God had been taken into his immediate presence. But nobody else was there: where they were I will tell you in a moment. Jesus, then, believed that heaven was the place where God had his throne, surrounded by his celestial court.

Hell,—what was that in the time of Jesus? To make the growth of the conception perfectly clear to you, I must speak,

first, of the Jewish ideas which I hinted at a moment ago. Do you know that in the Old Testament (though the translators have erroneously imported into it certain things which are not there) there is not a single clear trace of any belief in any future life for men, with the one exception of the book of Daniel, which is really an apocryphal book, and written only a little while before the time of Jesus?

The Jews did not believe in any future life. The one great thing which they longed for was continued life, to a grand old age, here. The one thing with which the wicked are threatened is that they shall die: the one thing that the righteous are promised is long life, full of peace and honor. But, as I have already intimated, before the time of Jesus a belief in continued existence for man after death had begun to take shape. We can hardly say that it was generally held, or held very clearly; but there grew up a belief in an underground world. It was just beneath the surface of the earth, a sort of cavernous place; and at first the spirits of the people who had died went down there, good and bad together. There was no distinction of a place of honor and a place of dishonor, of happiness or punishment. But by the time of Jesus—and he teaches this himself—this underworld, called Sheol by the Hebrews, called Hades by the Greeks (and the word Hades is the equivalent of Sheol in the New Testament),—by the time of Jesus this Sheol or Hades was divided into two parts. One of them was Gehenna, where the wicked went, and were in torment: the other was Paradise, where the good went, and were in peace. You remember Jesus on the cross is represented as saying to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." That does not mean "in heaven," because it is expressly taught in the New Testament that Jesus himself did not go to heaven until after the resurrection.

He spent this time in the underworld, from which he escaped at the time of the resurrection, leading captive many of its inhabitants, and for the first time introducing men into the presence of God in heaven.

Now, then, what did they think concerning the conditions of future life? For the Jews were not content with staying down in this Sheol, though it might be in the department of it which was called Paradise. The Jews were never, apparently, able to understand the meaning or beauty of any life separated from the body, and this green earth and beautiful sky over our heads. So the only way in which the Hebrews could rationally figure a future life was under the idea of a resurrection. The dead, then, when this belief grew up, were to be raised up out of Sheol, and clothed again with their bodies, to live forever on this earth. At first it was only the good Jews who were to be raised, and the rest were to sleep. Then it came to be all Jews, and the good ones were to enter into glory and the bad ones were to be punished. And later still, as Christianity universalized itself,—and it is represented this way in the teaching of Jesus,—there was to be a general resurrection of all people all over the world, and a judgment; the righteous, as the result of it, were to enter into eternal life, and the wicked were to go away into everlasting punishment. This, then, was what was meant in the time of Jesus by heaven and hell.

One other thing remains for us to notice with some particularity and care. What was the belief of Jesus in regard to the inhabitants of this invisible world, other than men? What was his doctrine of angels, in other words? At first, in the earliest belief of the Hebrews, there is no clear doctrine concerning angels. At last, however, partly, probably, by the internal growth of their own ideas, and partly as the result of their contact with the Persians, who had an angelol-

ogy quite completely developed, they came to hold the doctrine that the whole space between heaven and earth was filled with invisible beings. In heaven there were the seventy angels who presided each over the destinies of one of the seventy nations; and there were four great archangels, one of whom stood at each side of the throne of God, and who had control over the four corners of the earth and the four winds. Then they were graded down from them, through all ranks and ranges, until you came to the common angels that had charge of common men and women. Milton has probably figured it well when he speaks of these ranks, this hierarchy, as

“Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers”;

different ranks and grades, precisely as you find them in the feudal system under a monarchy. They were innumerable. They worshipped God. They went gladly on his errands; and vast numbers were constantly being created, so that the number was growing day by day. They served God and they ministered to those that trusted in God. Angels came to answer prayer, angels watched over the lives of individuals. It was a popular belief of the time of Jesus that each man, each woman, and each child had two guardian angels, one on his right hand and one on his left. You remember that saying of Jesus,—perhaps it never occurred to you what it means,—where he warns people against interfering with the welfare of his “little ones”; for he says, “In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.” You cannot interfere with them that is, without its being reported to the Father, and your being visited by the natural consequences of punishment which you deserve. Such, then, was the belief in regard to good angels.

Naturally, along with this grew up a belief in bad angels as

well. In the early part of the Old Testament there is no devil, there is no Satan. For, in the first place, in spite of the fact that we have turned the serpent that tempted Eve into the devil, originally that was only a part of an old Eastern legend, and the serpent was not supposed to be the devil at all. And we know also that this is a very modern composition. Although it appears in the first book of the Bible, it belongs toward the last part of the history of the Jewish people. So among the early Jews there was no conception of any evil spirit. That is clear enough, if you notice such facts as this: Jehovah is represented as the author not only of good, but of evil. And it is curious to see how the different writers contradict each other in this matter. There was a certain thing which David did. The old writer says that God instigated him to do it, and then punished him for it. A later writer, referring to the same thing, says the devil instigated him to do it. You see the progress of ideas. After they had come to believe in evil spirits, then they naturally attributed to these all the bad things that happened in the world. These evil spirits ruled where? The lower regions of the air were supposed to be their seat and home. Satan in the New Testament is "the prince of the powers of the air." He is "the god of this world." He has a kingdom here, in this world, which is opposed to the kingdom of God.

The minds of men swarmed with these evil spirits. Some writers say that there are a thousand bad spirits on the left hand of every man, and ten thousand on his right hand; that, if your eyes were opened so that you could see them, it would be impossible for you to live. The Arab in the desert,—to show you how vital and vivid that belief is with him,—when he throws away a stone or a bit of pottery, thinks that possibly it may hit some one of the throngs of

spirits that are in the neighborhood ; and he asks their pardon as he does it. The air, then, was swarming with these evil spirits : they thronged the desert, they haunted every lonely place, they were in graveyards and tombs ; there were devils that thronged about your life in the morning, that thronged about you at noon, that thronged about you at night. It was dangerous to sleep in an empty house, because you might there be exposed to their attacks without anybody to come to your rescue. The whole air was alive with these malign powers, seeking to injure you in every possible way. And many of the natural happenings of the world were attributed to them. Evil spirits were the cause of storms, the blighting of crops, the wrecking of vessels at sea. They were the authors of nearly all the diseases from which men suffered,— epilepsy, paralysis, insanity. Nobody doubted that these were caused by the demons which had entered into and taken possession of the person. How many of them could inhabit a single person? Why, it is said that Jesus cast out of Mary Magdalene seven devils. It is said in regard to one man that he was possessed by a whole legion of devils. You remember the story of the Gadarene swine, when Jesus is said to have cast this legion of devils out of a man, and there were enough of them so that they took possession of a whole herd of swine ; and they ran violently down a precipice, and were drowned in the sea. These are no figures of speech, friends. When you read about these things in the New Testament, you are not to say, as we so frequently say in the modern world, that a man who behaves badly is “possessed.” That has come to be a figure of speech now : it was a genuine, literal fact then. And, if there is any one thing in which Jesus shared the belief of his age, it is in this belief in possession by evil spirits. One of the great things that is spoken of as indi-

cating his marvellous power was the fact that he could cast out devils. I think this is so important and will be so interesting to you, that I wish to read the account of the casting out of a devil on a certain occasion, that is told us by the great Jewish historian, Josephus. He gives this as a specimen of a case he had known about himself.

"I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian and his sons and his captains and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils. And, when the man fell down immediately, he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And, when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon as he went out of the man to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man. And, when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were shown very manifestly."

I speak of this as showing how literally these ideas were held at that time. Nearly all the evils of the world were caused by the agency of these wicked spirits.

What did Jesus suppose the outcome was to be? There was to be a great conflict, a war, not only between men and men, but between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. And by and by Satan was to be overthrown, he was to be bound in chains and darkness, he and his devils; and all those that belonged to his kingdom were to be cast into a place of torment forever and ever.

Of course, it is implied all the way through — but I wish to speak of it just a moment by itself — that Jesus had no conception of anything like what we call the natural order of the world. Science, you know, is very modern. The thought that the world is governed in accordance with natural law is something that not all the people in Boston have yet got clearly and consistently into their heads. How shall we expect to find it, then, in a world which was only a battle-field between angels and demons?

Jesus had no idea of any supernatural, because he had no idea of any natural. There was no standard of probability; and so nothing was improbable. Can you not see? A miracle,— a flame burning in the bush of Moses, an axe floating on the water at the command of a prophet, the devils driven out of a man, a man's walking on the water, even the dead being raised,— any of these things were not improbable, because, as I said, there existed in the world no standard of probability. We say to-day, "We cannot believe such things, because they are contrary to the natural order of the world." But there was no natural order of the world in those days in the minds of people, consequently, there was no improbability. And if one man repeated to another that somebody in the next town had raised the dead, or had worked a miracle of any kind, it never occurred to them to disbelieve it because it was against any supposed natural order or law. Do you not see, then, the order of ideas in the midst of which Jesus lived? And, if we find that he believed in the sudden and miraculous coming of the kingdom of God, we are to judge his belief, not according to the standards of the present age, but according to the place and the ideas of the world in which he lived.

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD.

WE shall find that whatever is peculiar and significant in the teaching of Jesus concerning God will cluster about the word "Father." And yet Jesus was not the first man to give that name to the Infinite One. We need to remember, however, that a name may not necessarily mean the same to different persons; that it may not mean the same in one age that it means in another age. It contains that which is put into it: it carries the power of the thought and the feeling of those who use it. It has been my purpose in this whole course of sermons to treat the teaching of Jesus, not as an isolated fact, standing alone by itself, but to look at it as related to the thought which preceded him, to contemporary thought, and also as related to the thought of the present day. In this way only can we understand that which is peculiar to him.

If we go back, then, until we reach even a barbarous period in the history of the world, we shall find some of the peoples speaking of their God under the name of Father. We shall find, at any rate, that kings and rulers, the nobility, the dominant classes, traced their origin to the God that they worshipped. We shall understand this if we remember that in many cases the worship was the worship of ancestors. Some one who was supposed to be the father of the tribe, having died and become lifted up and deified, is the God of the people. So you see how natural a process it was for

people to think of themselves as in some sense the children of the God they worshipped. And it is significant and very interesting to me to note that the oldest name for God with which we are familiar in any language or in any literature is the old Sanskrit Dyaus-pitar, Heaven-Father,—very like, you see, in one way to the phrase “Father in heaven”; and yet the meaning underlying it was very far away from the thought of Jesus. The same thing is true of the Greeks. The Greek word “Zeus” is this old Sanskrit word Dyaus, “heaven.” And it comes out plainer still when we deal with the Roman or Latin thought; for the word “Jupiter” is only the old Sanskrit turned into Latin. Jupiter, then, is Heaven-Father, or Father in heaven; or, as he was called by the poets, “the father of gods and men.”

And still, if we stop a moment and look into the content of the word “Father,” as used by the Romans, what shall we find? If we go back far enough, we find anything but what we mean in the modern world by the fatherly feeling, the fatherly spirit, the fatherly care. Jupiter was, indeed, a father in the sense of generator, author, parent; but he sat up in the heavens, jealous of the prosperity and welfare of this poor suffering human race below. There are pathetic stories told, in those old classic days, of how the gods were jealous of men, how they were jealous of human happiness, jealous of human prosperity. If a man were over-happy, he expected that the jealous gods would somehow thwart him and send him disaster. There is a lingering trace of that in the popular mind still. Have you never heard people say that they were “too happy to have it last”? Take the old Prometheus myth, for example, as an illustration of what kind of father Jupiter was. Prometheus sends down the divine gift of fire to the shivering, shuddering race of mankind. And the “father in heaven” is so angry about it that

he chains him on the mountains of Caucasus, to spend the passing years in torment, because of his pity for the neglected children of this father.

We find a trace of this same jealousy in the Hebrew ideas of their God, if we go back far enough. Take the Eden myth. Did you ever note the significance of it? Why is it that Adam was turned out of the garden? The gods,—for there were more than one of them: at any rate, they are represented as carrying on a dialogue,—they say, "Let us now go down, and turn him out of the garden." Why? "Lest he put forth his hand and eat of the tree of life, and become as one of us." It was jealousy, then, on the part of the old Hebrew gods, the fear that Adam might attain immortal life, and come very near their own rank, that led them to drive him forth from the garden.

We find, then, anything but the fatherly spirit manifested on the part of old-time gods. They were kings, they sat upon their thrones on Olympus or wherever they were supposed to live, engaged in revel, in looking after their own pleasures; now and then doing something for the race of men on condition that they were begged hard enough, or that sufficient honors were paid them, or their altars were piled high enough with gifts. And over and over again, throughout all that ancient world, we find the representation made that the gods were sending pestilence or war or disaster, right and left, among the people of the world. And why? Not because they had been wicked, only because they had forgotten the temples and neglected the altars; because they did not pay them the flattery and the tribute which they demanded. This is the kind of fatherhood that you find prevailing in the thought of the ancient races.

I would not have you for a moment misunderstand me to the extent of supposing that there are no finer, higher

traces of the thought of the gods than this. I only mean that this was the general, popular feeling and impression about them. You find, away off in Egypt, among the earliest sayings that we have in the world, one so tender and beautiful that it is difficult to surpass it in any saying of the present day,—a saying identical with one of the most beautiful that we have in the New Testament. You might suppose that one was a translation of the other, only there is no trace of connection. They probably both sprang up out of the tenderness of the human heart. It is that old Egyptian saying that “God shall wipe away all tears from human eyes.” Probably you supposed that was only in the New Testament. It is thousands of years older than the New Testament, and is Egyptian first.

When we come, then, to consider particularly the Hebrew thought,—leading by one or two rapid steps up to the time of Jesus,—we find that God was called by many names in the Old Testament, but only now and then spoken of as Father, and then, I think, never with the depth or significance or meaning which Jesus himself afterward put into that word. Let us note two or three of the principal names.

In the opening verse of the Bible the word translated “God,”—where it says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,”—the word translated “God” is *Elohim*. It is a plural word, and it means “gods,” and is undoubtedly a remnant, a relic, of the old time when the Hebrews were polytheists, and believed in many gods, like their neighbors. The word is not always translated “God” where it appears in the Old Testament. In that passage in the Psalms where it says that man is “a little lower than the angels,” in the Hebrew it is the word *Elohim*, “a little lower than the *Gods*,”—a little lower than the same Being that is

represented in the first verse of the Bible as the Creator. In other places, the word is translated in different ways. The first word in the Bible, then, as we come across it,—not in chronological order, perhaps, but, at any rate, in order of the books as they now stand,—is *Elohim*, “Gods.” What does this mean? It means the Strong Ones. Thus the predominant idea among the people then, as they thought of God, was strength, a Being of might and power. The next word I wish to notice is *Adonai*: that plays a large part in Hebrew thought; and it means “Lord,” or “Master.” That is the word that was more commonly used among the Hebrews throughout their whole history than any other in speaking of their national God. The other word is *Yahveh*; and that is supposed to mean the I AM, the Eternal, the Being who is self-existent. God, then, among the Hebrews, so far as the names applied to him are concerned, was the Strong One, the Lord, or Master, the Eternal. These are the dominant names by which he is called.

And it is very clear that the popular feeling among the Hebrews was not that of looking upon God as a tender, gentle, loving Father. Let me give you here, as I have concerning the Greeks and the Romans, one or two ideas of what this Father could be supposed to do in the way of executing justice, for example. You remember that story of Korah, in one of the old historical books. He committed what was regarded as a grievous sin. What does God do in the way of punishing him? Does he single him out and punish him alone? No, he has the earth open and swallow up Korah, his wife, his children, every single relative he had in the whole tribe, all his household goods, everything that belonged to him. This was what was regarded as justice,—justice worthy even of God in those far-off times. Come down to the time of David. David on a certain occasion,

decides to take a census of his people, to find out how many there are. This was supposed to indicate a lack of trust in his God, as though his safety depended on the number of his armies rather than on being on the side of his heavenly King. What does God do? Does God punish David, who was the only one who was charged with being guilty? No: he sends a pestilence, and destroys thousands on thousands of the people of Israel, who had had nothing to do with it. This, again, I say, represents the idea of justice that prevailed in that far-off time, and throws a curious light on the conception of the God that was worshipped.

And yet I should here be doing an injustice to those old times if I made the impression that they had no tender, fatherly thoughts of God. It is curious, I think, that in the Psalms, which contain the sweetest, and, in general, the most beautiful, religious, reverential, and worshipful ideas of the Hebrew people, God is never anywhere spoken of as a Father. But I wish to give you just one or two specimens of this idea of fatherhood cropping out.

In Jeremiah we find this passage: "Is not Ephraim my dear son, and my pleasant child? For I well remember still what I have said to him. Therefore my heart breaks towards him, and moves me to have mercy upon him." And, then, in Isaiah: "Art thou our father? For Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us." "Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our redeemer; from everlasting is thy name." And, then, in Malachi: "Should not a son honor his father, and a servant his master? If now I am a father, where is mine honor; and, if I am a master, where is he that feareth me?" Then, in Hosea, people are spoken of as "sons of the living God." In Jeremiah, again, God is called "my Father." And, then, in Malachi, and in some of the later apocryphal books, we find most beautiful expressions

of this idea of the fatherhood of God. But the point I wish you to have in mind is that this was not the common, not the general, not the popular attitude. This represents the finer and higher insight of a few chosen souls from time to time.

Here is what speaks volumes concerning the attitude of the people in general towards God,—the fact that, as time went on, and people came nearer and nearer to the time when Jesus was born, God was lifted higher and higher, and farther and farther removed from popular thought or popular sympathy, so that at last they came to think that it was wrong even to speak his name; when, therefore, they read any passage from the Old Testament, and came to the name Yahveh, they always substituted the word Adonai; so that the name Yahveh became the unspeakable, the unpronounceable name. And there grew more and more among the people the feeling that at last expressed itself in the Pharisees, the popular party of the time,—the idea that God was the great King, high and lifted up, the jealous God, the God who demanded the exactest obedience on the part of his people. Now and then, indeed, there were outcries from the hearts of the prophets, declaring the multitude of their sacrifices of no avail, saying that what God wanted was mercy and justice and the loving heart and the true life. But the popular current of the time tended more and more towards the idea that what must be done was to keep exactly the literal law. "Build a hedge around the law," became the popular cry. And we find in Paul an echo of that old feeling, when he says that the law became a burden too heavy to be borne. The popular idea, then, the prevailing idea in the old time, concerning God, was of him as a far-removed, awful being, King, Master, Judge, jealous, demanding absolute and exact obedience to the ritual law. You see, then, that when Jesus

appeared, while he planted himself on the Old Testament, while there was no break between the life of his people and his own teaching, there was in his thought such a heightening, such deepening, of the thought of God's fatherhood as meant a revolution in the religious conceptions of the world. Jesus almost never speaks of him as anything but Father.

Now let us note what kind of a father, what Jesus meant by the word "Father." In the first place, there is that God-consciousness on his part that I spoke of two or three Sundays ago, the sense that God is his Father. "My Father," he says, with that sense of the conscious nearness and intercommunion between his soul and the soul of the Infinite One. But he is not only the Father of Jesus. He is the Father of all men. In the opening words of the Lord's Prayer, he does not teach his disciples to say, "My Father," but "Our Father." It is not true, indeed, that there is any distinct or definite passage in which Jesus teaches explicitly that God is the equal Father of all mankind; but it is implied, it is wrapped up, in the teaching of Jesus, as something that cannot be eliminated. He goes beyond his own people, and picks out the hated Samaritan, the traditional foe of his people, and holds him up as an example of one who had the same Father in heaven, and who illustrated the meaning of sonship and brotherliness better than even the highest of his own people. He is, then, the Father of all men.

And another step Jesus took, very remarkable in its meaning, remarkable in the influence that it has had on current history since that day. He does not teach that God is the Father of the good only. He is the equal Father of the evil. He makes his sun to rise on the just and on the unjust. He sends his rain on the good and on the bad alike. And, when

Jesus teaches his disciples the attitude that they are to hold towards their fellow-men, he says, "You are not to love your friends only, or your neighbors only, but your enemy." And why? "You are to do it in order that you may be like your Father in heaven. You are to do it that you may be perfect." "If you salute your brethren only, if you are kind and good only to those who are kind and good to you, what do ye more than anybody else? If you want to be like your Father in heaven, you must do something more than this." He is, then, the Father of all men, good and bad alike, and shows an equal mercy to the unkind and unthankful as to those who are readiest to acknowledge his gifts.

And, then, there is one more point that is of immense importance. My friend, the Rev. Mr. Voysey, of London, has been preaching about Jesus lately; and he has made a charge concerning his teachings which I think is based upon an incomplete criticism of the Gospels. He says that Jesus perpetually teaches the doctrine of mediation, that God cannot be intimately, lovingly approached at first-hand by any of his children. Let us note now the teaching of the Gospels, and see.

In the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus purposely gives his disciples as a type of true prayer, you would suppose that he would have made it complete, would you not? If it had been necessary for men to approach their Father in the name of Jesus, or for the sake of Jesus, or in any other way through any mediator, would he not have been likely to hint it here? No trace of it. Simply "Our Father,"—the direct utterance of any human soul, God's child, to him. And, then, take the teaching of that marvellous parable of the prodigal son,—God ready to receive, to forgive, without any sacrifice, without any mediation of priest, any mediation of church, any mediation of Jesus himself or any other; God ready to

meet half-way the child returning to him, the only condition being the repentant heart, and the ready will to come.

There is not, then,—and let me say this deliberately, and note the significance of it,—there is not, in the first three Gospels, which represent the only authentic tradition concerning the life and teaching of Jesus, a trace anywhere of any teaching of the mediation of anybody between the individual soul and God. The Gospel of John is full of it. But the Gospel of John has no authenticity or authority, when we are trying to find out what Jesus meant. It is a philosophical treatise, written a hundred and fifty years nearly after Jesus, and written after the idea of the Messiahship of Jesus had grown up and been firmly established in the popular mind. It is prominently, offensively thrust forth there in the Gospel of John everywhere. Jesus uses language, or is represented as using language, which we would be glad to think he never used, it seems to me. All that have ever come before him, he says, are thieves and robbers; nobody can come to God except through him; if you want anything from God, you must pray in his name. This is the teaching throughout the Gospel of John. This, you will note, is a reflection on earth of the old ideas of government. It is very curious, but you will note it as almost a universal fact, that the common people have generally thought of God and his heavenly court after their own prevailing ideas of what was fitting in human government. And this mediation scheme, that has played such a part in Protestantism, but which has not the sanction of one single word or syllable or letter that ever fell from the lips of the Nazarene,—this scheme is nothing more than thrusting into the heavens the old autocracy of the government of the despot or Sultan, who could be approached only through his Grand Vizier, or through some personal favorite or friend. If you could get

influence at court, you could present your plea with some chance of being heard, but merely on its own merits you had no chance at all. This is the scheme that has become a part of the Orthodoxy of Christendom. But note what Jesus teaches in another place as bearing upon this. You remember that parable of the unjust judge, which has been so frequently misunderstood. Jesus represents a poor widow as beseeching an unjust judge to do her justice, until at last she wears him out with her importunity; and he says, "Though I do not care anything about God, and have no regard for the rights of man, I will do justice for this poor widow, because she comes here so often that she troubles me. I will get rid of her on any terms." Does Jesus say that God wants a like importunity to that? He says, "If an unjust judge can be played upon and induced at last to do justice, how much more will your Father who is in heaven care for you!" No importunity taught there. He says: "If a child asks his father for bread, will he give him a stone? if he asks a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven!" All the teaching of Jesus is like that from first to last.

But in justice to Mr. Voysey it ought to be said that his position holds good as against the ordinary Protestant doctrine.

There is a further extension of the thought I need to note, a new element of this fatherhood. Jesus could not have been a great person for prayer-meetings or to lead public prayer of any kind. He says: "Your Father in heaven knows before you ask him what you have need of. No need of carrying information to him." And he says also that he is more ready,—no need to beg of him,—more ready to give good gifts than earthly parents are to give them to their

children. This is the teaching of the kind of fatherhood that Jesus believed in. No need of importunity, no need of begging, no need of beseeching: it only needs that we be willing to receive the infinite gifts of God's love and care.

Remember, then, that in the authentic teaching of Jesus there is no idea of mediatorship. I find myself wondering, almost every week, at some of our Unitarian ministers. I confess I wonder at the old-style minister just the same. All my boyhood through I hardly ever heard a prayer that did not close with "for Christ's sake." But that is not a New Testament phrase. There is no authority for it, not only in the teaching of Jesus, but anywhere else. The only phrase that is represented as being on the lips of Jesus is "in my name," — "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it." But that is in the Gospel of John. In the authentic tradition concerning Jesus there is no authority for praying "for Christ's sake" or "in Christ's name" or "as the disciples of Christ," or anything of the kind. Jesus sweeps away all intermediaries, and in his teaching introduces every child of the Father — the poorest, the lowest, the most lost — into the immediate presence, where his lightest whisper enters the Father's ear and sinks deep in the Father's heart.

There is, however, one limitation to the perfect ideal of a fatherhood, it seems to me, — I speak of it modestly, — in the teaching of Jesus. I wish it were not there. I wish I could find some principle of criticism by which I might be permitted to think that Jesus did not teach one doctrine. But I know of no way of reading the Gospels by which to escape the conviction that Jesus taught the doctrine of eternal punishment. It does not seem consistent with this tenderness and perfect love of the Father; but there the words stand: the sin against the Holy Ghost that can never be for-

given ; the fire that is never quenched, the worm that never dies ; the impassable gulf, which nobody can cross, between Dives and Lazarus ; the threat against the Pharisees, that they could not escape the damnation of hell. One passage we are authorized to say he never uttered,—that famous one, so often quoted, in the last chapter of Mark, where he is represented as saying, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” This was not a word of Jesus : it is a later addition to the Gospel of Mark, and does not belong in the earlier tradition at all. But it seems to me we cannot escape the idea that Jesus did teach eternal punishment. In that famous judgment scene in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, he places the sheep on the right hand of the judge, and the goats on the left, and says, “These shall go away into everlasting life, and these into eternal death” : the same word in the original applies in both cases. This, then, if it be true,—if Jesus did hold this,—is a serious limitation in regard to the perfection of his teaching as to the doctrine of the divine fatherhood ; for we cannot to-day believe that anything is good up there which would be evil down here. And one of our Unitarian ministers struck the key-note of an eternal principle when he said that the modern thought of Unitarianism stood for the divinity of man and the humanity of God. I do not know that we ought to be surprised to find that the teaching of Jesus is not absolutely perfect. He shared, beyond question, in many things, the common ideas and teachings of his age. And, perhaps, if we turn it the other way, we are authorized to lift him even to a higher pedestal of reverence and love and fame. Child of his people, child of his age, with no teaching except that which he could gather out of the surroundings of the life of which he was a part, that he should so transcend, so magnificently transcend, his time in

so many directions, is all the more wonderful when we think of him as only the child of his time, and as sharing some of its ideas which the later civilization of the world has come to hold erroneous.

It remains for me now to hint some extensions of the thought of God which are a part of the life of the modern world. Jesus taught, I believe, the grandest conception of the divine fatherhood that the world had ever seen up to that time ; and he taught, in some directions, as fine and high a conception of it as even the present age can dream. But there have been such changes in human thought since his day that we must remember that, when we use the word "Father" of God to-day, we are not reproducing the thought of Jesus. There has been a tremendous advance, a heightening, deepening, widening, of human thought in these directions, of which we ought to take brief account.

In the first place, I had occasion to tell you last Sunday that the universe, the world of Jesus, was almost inconceivably small as compared with the universe in which we are living to-day. So, though Jesus might speak of his Father as infinite, as filling heaven and earth, inhabiting eternity, what could infinite or heaven or earth or eternity mean to that age as compared with what it means to-day? Suppose we were suddenly shut into a universe no larger than the orbit of the moon, with no thought of anything but empty space beyond : do you not see how there would be a narrowing, an inevitable shrinking, of the conception of the God of this universe? But, when now with our telescopes that reveal to us millions of suns, with their systems of worlds and moons sweeping about them, reaching on and on with absolutely no limit, no conception of a limit, how much more do we put into the word when we say "the God of the universe" than even Jesus could have put into it, living

in the kind of world which his imagination presented to him !

Another point: we have learned to put a meaning into the word *unity*, as applied to God, such as was not possible until this very century. Jesus, of course, believed in one God, in the sense that he was a being up in heaven, and that there were not two or three, but only one. But what does the word *unity* mean to us in the face of the revelations of modern science? We have found, for example, that in the most distant star—that one so far away that it takes light years and years to reach us—precisely the same matter exists, precisely the same forces are at work, precisely the same processes are going on,—the same metals that we find here under our feet, the same kind of dust, the same earth, the same forces of every kind. We have demonstrated that light and heat and electricity and magnetism and all the forces of the world are only transformations of one force, all modes of motion. In other words, modern science, within the lifetime of most of us who are here, has grasped the very heart of the unity of the universe, so that we know it has one life, one law, one element, everywhere. And this was not known, could not have been known, until the last few years. So that we have learned what it means, in a new sense, to say “One God and Father of us all.”

Another point: never until the modern world was there the sense of the nearness of God, such as is possible to us to-day. Even to Jesus, his Father was up in heaven. He said: “I could pray to him if I wanted to, and he would immediately send me more than twelve legions of angels. He hears every whisper, and quick as thought almost he could be at my side.” But he is up in heaven still; there is his throne, that is his home. But modern science has revealed to us the astounding, overwhelming thought that the throne

of God is in every particle of dust and every drop of dew, as much as it is in the most distant and mighty suns. God does not merely paint the flowers. The very life that thrills through the flowers, the very processes that unfold their beauty, the very exhalation of their fragrance,—these are the present, living working of God. God is not off in any heaven: he is here. Never was he so near to us, this heavenly Father, as he is to-day.

Another thought that was entirely foreign to the thought of Jesus. The Father of Jesus ruled the world like a king, in an arbitrary way, interfered with its working, wrought miracles, needed to bow the heavens and come down to the deliverance of his people. We have learned to think that the universe is a scene of order: we do not any longer doubt the possibility of a certain kind of answer to prayer because we question God's love or because we wonder whether he can. We recognize all the activities of the universe in every part as the present activities of God; and we regard it not as piety to suppose that, at our dictation or request, he will interfere with his own universe's working, on which all the beauty and order and life of the world depend. In this universe of order, then, we must think of a new relation to God as regards prayer; and there is no place in it for the possibility of miracle.

And one thought more: God is so immediately with us, he has been so vitally in the race from the beginning, civilization is such an unfolding of the thought and life of God, that it is no longer possible for a man who lives in the modern universe to think of revelation, of religion, of the law of God, as anything imported into the world from without, either by the means of a messenger or through a book. The laws of morals, of right and wrong, the laws of the body, of the mind, the laws of spirit, the laws of the relationship in which we

stand to our Father,—these are not in any book, are not miraculously sent by any teacher. They are inherent in the nature of things; and the revelation of God now is the natural unfolding of the divine which is in and through as well as over all. So much for the hints as to the extension, the heightening, deepening, and widening of the thought of the Father that has come in the nineteen hundred years since Jesus went into the unseen.

But let us not forget that these words are not spoken in any derogation of the magnificent work of Jesus, which stands out single and alone in the annals of human thought and the history of human life. Jesus did teach a new doctrine of the fatherhood of God,—a doctrine of love, a doctrine of tenderness, a doctrine of pity and gentleness, sympathy, help,—a doctrine so mighty, so divine, so sweet, and so fair that it has gone on, like a star, leading the world ever since his day,—a star shining above all the chaos, above all the cruelty, all the bloodshed, all the wars, of the world; shining down with its rebuking ray on a world that has dared to speak of itself as followers of him, and which yet did not the things which he said. Jesus put into the heart of Christendom this temper of love and meekness and gentleness and sympathy and pity, so that it has more and more moulded the life of Christendom; and it is that in it which is sweet and true, the saving salt of Christendom to-day. For the one thing that has lasted through all these centuries, and will last forever, is the spirit, the temper, of Jesus,—that which we think of when we speak of Christian pity, Christian resignation, Christian gentleness, Christian love and care. And this is enough to set Jesus on high in the throne of our reverence and love forever.

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT MAN.

I SUPPOSE, in one way of looking at it, that our opinion, our belief, about God,—about the Power eternally manifested through the phenomenal changes of the universe,—is more important than anything else, because—by implication, at any rate—it includes everything else. But next to that in importance, as bearing on the nature and conduct of life, is the theory we hold concerning man, as to what sort of being he is, his nature, needs, possibilities. This morning, then, I propose to discuss with you what, so far as we can find out, Jesus believed, and what he actually taught, concerning the origin, the nature, the condition, the needs, and the destiny of man. Without any preliminary, then, let us turn to the first of these points.

What did Jesus teach concerning the origin of man? He has taught nothing. He does not anywhere allude to the question of the origin of man. So far as we can find out from the records, he had no interest whatever in what we to-day are accustomed to call philosophical speculations or scientific theories. His teaching and his work were purely practical. Of course there is, underlying his teaching concerning other things touching human nature, certain implications as to many things that he does not touch directly. But, apparently, he takes things as they are, and addresses himself to the practical betterment of the world. But perhaps we may assume that he shared the ordinary belief of

his people at the time concerning the origin of the human race. At any rate, it will be interesting for us to recall briefly what we already know concerning the theories of the Jews that were held at that time, because I wish to place the ideas and teaching of Jesus, throughout this course of sermons, in relation to the beliefs of his age as well as to the beliefs of our own.

In the oldest records that we have of any Jewish teaching or belief there is no more trace of any theory concerning the origin of man than there is in the teaching of Jesus himself. It is only after the Jews came into contact with the Assyrians and the Babylonians that we find in any of their records any reference whatever to the creation of the world or the creation of man. The Eden story, then, so far as we can find out, is not an original tradition of the Hebrew race. It is a very striking fact that, apart from these early chapters in Genesis, there is no allusion to it anywhere, even in the Old Testament afterwards, with the exception of a general reference in one chapter of Ezekiel, who was himself the prophet of the Captivity. What was the story, however, after the Jews came to accept it? I doubt if many of you have noticed it; but there are two stories in Genesis, written by two writers, and placed in their present juxtaposition by some unknown editor, long after the two tales came into their present form. In the first of these Adam and Eve are created outright and at the same time; no reference whatever to any story of Eve's having been made out of a rib of Adam; apparently, they are both independently created, and at the same time. In the next story Adam is created alone. Then the animals, after they are created, are brought to him. They pass in review before him, he gives them names, and then it is naïvely suggested that no one of these was a fit companion for Adam. And so God caused a deep sleep

to fall upon him, and created Eve as a helpmeet,—a help meet, or fit, or suitable for him. Eve, then, in this story, appears to be regarded, as she has been regarded by a great many men ever since, as simply an afterthought. These are the stories, then, as they appear in the Bible, as they were currently held and generally accepted by the Jews at the time of Jesus. Jesus, however, himself, as I said, never alludes to the origin of man ; seems to take it for granted that the current belief of his time was sufficient, while he addresses himself to the practical work of trying to help him.

Let us pass now to the second point, the nature of man. I do not now propose to deal with his nature as good or bad, but rather with his constitution. What kind of being did Jesus suppose he was ? Here, again, I place his belief against a background of earlier Hebrew thought. If we turn to the first chapter of Genesis, we find that it is said that God formed man, or the Elohim formed him, out of the dust of the ground, and then breathed into his nostrils, and he became a living soul. We are to guard here, however, as we note this passage, against putting into this word "soul" the ordinary meaning. It does not at all mean "soul" as we speak of soul when we contrast it with body : it means nothing more than the breath of life ; for precisely the same word in the Hebrew is used of the souls of animals,—they are placed on precisely the same level.

As I have already had occasion to tell you in another connection, the Jews at first had no belief in any future life. Man was a being who was born, who lived here under the blue sky his allotted term of years, and died ; and that was the end of him. There grew up, however, after a time a belief that this soul, this life which was in the body, was something that could continue to exist after the body's

decay. But here, again, for a long time there was no such belief as we hold in the modern world. There was no going to heaven, there was no going to hell. There was only an underground cavern beneath the surface of the earth, which was called "Sheol"; and to this the shades went down. But this life was only half-living. There was no pulsing reality about it. It was only a sort of shadow-world, to which the poor remnant of the life that they called the soul at that time descended. But by the time we reach the age of Jesus the belief had quite fully grown up that man was a dual being, that he had a body, and that he had a soul, in the modern sense of that word, a spiritual nature; that he was double; and that, when the body died, the soul, or the spirit, continued still to live, and that it went either to a place of happiness or to a place of misery, according to its character and to the life that it had lived here. In Paul there is the appearance of a still more complicated doctrine. I speak of this because a great deal is made of it in some discussions at the present time. By many Paul is supposed to teach that man possesses three constituents of his being,—that he has a body and a soul and a spirit, the soul being spoken of as the animating principle of the physical life, while the spirit is the immortal part. But I think a careful study of Paul's teaching will make it doubtful whether he held any such idea. It seems to me closer to his thought to suppose that the spirit, as when Paul speaks of the "spiritual man," means a renovated, renewed condition of the soul, his release from the animal nature, and his being re-created into the image of the divine. But there is no trace of this in Jesus. Jesus accepts, apparently, the simple idea of a man as a dual being, containing a soul, or a spirit (using the words indifferently), and a body; though Jesus very frequently, and in some

passages which have been grossly misinterpreted and misapplied, teaches that this "soul" is only the breath of life. I do not mean that he teaches this in contrast to the idea that man is naturally immortal, but that in some passages where the word "soul" is used he is only referring to the animal life. For example, in that famous one, that used to be so frightful to me, where he describes the rich fool, and says, "What profit is it if a man shall gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Jesus had no reference to losing the soul, in the theological sense of the word. It was only pointing out the folly of supposing that it was worth while to accumulate property all your life, and then suddenly die and leave it, and not be able to take it with you. "What is the use of spending your whole life in accumulating this, when suddenly, even to-night, your life may be required of you, and you go away and leave it all?" But Jesus teaches, for the purpose which we wish to have in mind this morning, this idea of man as a dual being, a body and a soul.

Now pass to the more important point, of his condition. What did Jesus suppose to be the condition of the human race, in its relation to God, as good or bad, as righteous or sinful? Here, again, it is curious to note that the Hebrews, in their early thought, had no theory at all about the origin of evil. They looked out over the world, and saw that men died, saw that they suffered, that they were the victims of disease and pain, and that they did wrong, injuring themselves and their fellow-men. But they had no trace of a theory as to how this condition came about. In the earliest records of the Hebrew people, it is simply assumed, as a matter of common observation. But, to recur again to the Genesis story,—another phase of it, which I did not touch upon before,—there came up at last the belief in the fall of man from a condition of perfect innocence as accounting for the exist-

ence of evil. And this note, was a distinct step in advance, in the way of philosophical thought. In the earliest Hebrew records, the people, in the most naïve way, speak of God as the author of evil, as the author of suffering, the author of sin, precisely in the same way in which they speak of him as the author of happiness and good. But, as their ideas of the righteousness and the goodness of God grew, it came, apparently, to seem to them incongruous to suppose that he could also be the author of evil ; and so this story, which undoubtedly was borrowed from the Assyrians or the Babylonians, was accepted as an explanation. God made the world all fair at first : you see not only the condition of man, but the physical condition of the world itself, was different in the old story,—there were no thorns, there were no briars, there was no evil anywhere. The serpent himself even was not an evil creature : he was only “the most subtle of all the beasts of the field.” He walked upright, in some mysterious way that we cannot now imagine. He was able to talk ; but he was not alone in that. In that far-off, happy time, the simplicity of the days that we find in the fables of *Æsop*, all the animals could talk. Eve was not at all astonished when the serpent spoke to her : she simply enters into conversation with him as naturally as she would speak with Adam. She is not astonished even at his wisdom, or his having an opinion as to what she ought to do or ought not. The Jews believed that the purpose that the serpent had in mind was simply to cause evil to come to Adam and Eve on account of the need which he felt for their superior condition : they attributed to the serpent a quality which has been observed as one of human nature in all ages. And note, at first, there is no trace of the serpent’s being the devil : that, again, is purely an afterthought, a theological interpretation of an Old World bit of folk-lore and tradition. It has no trace of any such

thing in it whatever. This was the theory which at last was accepted, to account for the fact. After Adam and Eve had sinned, then God cast them out of the beautiful garden: it was closed, so that the world was never able to discover it again; and thorns and thistles and briars, and all evils, sprang up, death entered into the world, and pain and moral wrong,—all on account of this first sin of our first parents in that far-off time. Now, did Jesus accept this as the explanation of the condition in which he found man? Perhaps we are safe in assuming that he did. And yet it is very worthy of note that nowhere, in any single word of Jesus, does he allude to it. It does seem strange, if he believed in a fallen race, that he should not have spoken of it somewhere. But no reference to Adam, no reference to Eve, no reference to serpent, no reference to garden, no reference to anything of the kind. Apparently, he simply recognized the condition as he saw it,—that men were evil, men were sinful, men hurt each other, men were alienated from God, men were dying, men were suffering: they needed help, they needed deliverance. This, then, is Jesus' teaching concerning the condition of man.

And now, turning to the next point, what did the Jews say, what did Paul say, and what did Jesus say, concerning the needs of man? Here, you see, is something very vital, something which lies at the heart of all religion and all the theologies of the world. And it is very important for us, if we wish to understand the great Nazarene, that we should note precisely the position which he occupies here. What, then, did Jesus say concerning the need—the religious, the moral need—of the human race? Here, again, let me lead up to it, so that we may see it in its relations. The early Hebrews recognized sin and wrong: they recognized injury done by one man to another; and they recognized what they

supposed to be man's condition as out of right relation to God. They had the two thoughts in their minds. If a man did wrong to his neighbor, at first there is no appearance of a thought that in so doing he had injured God. He must make reparation to his neighbor. It was not enough that he pray or offer a sacrifice. If he had injured his neighbor, he must make up for it to his neighbor. That is the early Jewish thought; and it is pretty good thought for us to keep in mind to-day. If he was out of right relation to God, what then? Why, it could be very easily arranged through the priest, by offering God a gift. There was no trouble about any experience, apparently,—mental or spiritual anguish for sin, any burdened conscience: it was the simplest thing in the world. At the appointed time he brought his offering to the temple or to the tabernacle or to whatever place existed where he could find an ordained priesthood, made his offering, and God, up in heaven, was supposed to be appeased. But Jewish thought grew on this subject; and so, as you come up the line of prophetic advance, you find the more far-sighted, and those with keener insight into human nature, asking the question: "What is the use of all these external sacrifices? A man brings the bull or goat or pigeon, and it is slaughtered, and the offering is made; but is the man changed any? He goes away precisely the same kind of being he was before!" So they said, "It is not enough." God had come to be a righteous God now; and he was not satisfied with bleeding altars and the ceremony of the priesthood. He wanted righteousness in the inward parts, the clean heart, the loving thought and service to one's fellow-men. But along with this, and at about this period in the development of Hebrew thought, there came in another idea that has played a very important part in the theology of Christendom,—the idea of vicarious suffering, the

idea of vicarious atonement, of substituted sin and substituted righteousness. It was observed among the Hebrews that good people suffered. That conflicted with their early philosophy; for they had been accustomed to hold, as you can see in the Book of Job, that, if a man suffered, it was a sign that he had sinned and was being punished. Job repudiated that. He says: "I know that I am suffering; but I have not sinned. I am just before God." What was the meaning of this suffering, then? The idea sprang up on the part of the Jews that it was vicarious, that somehow the undeserved suffering of the righteous atoned for the sin of the wicked. So you see this idea, in a perfectly natural way, came into the human mind. It had its fullest and grandest representation in the teaching of Paul. Paul taught that no man was good or could be good; that he was not able to keep the law; that the one only being since the foundation of the world who had kept the law and been perfectly righteous was Jesus the Christ, and that he had suffered vicariously for the sins of the world, and so had atoned for all human wrong and human evil. And those who accepted this offering were clothed upon by the righteousness of the Christ, so that their sins were hidden away and God took account of them no more. This is the teaching of Paul: this has been the teaching of the old straight orthodoxies of Christendom from that time until the present. Now we are ready to see what Jesus taught.

Jesus teaches two things. He teaches, first,—contrary, I think, to common idea,—the permanence of the Jewish law. Not a single word in any authentic teaching of Jesus about the law's passing away. On the contrary, he says: "I came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil. Not one jot, not one tittle of the law shall pass away until all is fulfilled." What was a jot? A jot is the smallest letter of the Hebrew lan-

guage. What is a tittle? A little stroke, an accent over a letter. You see how forcible the saying of Jesus is: not even the smallest letter of a single word, not even an accent, shall pass from the law until all be fulfilled. He did disregard the traditions of the people; but there is no trace anywhere of a slighting action or a slighting word concerning what he undoubtedly believed to be the law which originated with Moses.

But what next? Jesus taught only one thing as essential in the sight of God. There is no trace in the authentic teaching of Jesus of any mediator, not a trace of any vicarious suffering, not a trace of any vicarious atonement, not a trace of any substituted sin, not a trace of any substituted righteousness: not one single thing, in any authentic word, reported as having fallen from his lips, gives the slightest countenance to any of these supposed central doctrines of the theology of Christendom. He teaches just one thing. He does not teach that man is unable to keep the law: Paul does. No doctrine of inability ever fell from the lips of Jesus. He does not teach that the reason has been implicated in the fall, so that it cannot discern the truth. What does he teach? He says, "Ye can discern the signs of the sky: why can you not discern, then, these spiritual signs of the time?"—appealing to them as though they had the faculty and the power. He says, "Why of your own selves judge ye not what is right?" He assumes the doctrine of man's mental competence to find the truth and discern what is right; and he assumes man's full power to do it. Not a trace anywhere of Paul's doctrine of a broken will, incompetence, inability, to fulfil God's law, but a grand appeal everywhere to man, as a grand, thinking, willing being, able to see and to do that which is right. And then what? He places this man, competent in brain, competent in will power,—

places him, without any sacrifice, any mediation of any kind, any vicarious atonement, any substituted Saviour,—places him face to face with his Father, his God, and tells him to deal directly with him, to become reconciled to him; to see what is right; to love God with all his heart and with all his mind and with all his soul and with all his strength, and to love his neighbor as himself. And, when he is in that condition, he needs nothing else, because this love becomes the spontaneous spring of every good thought, of every good action. This is the teaching of Jesus as to what man needs. Man is a child of God, and needs simply to love God and live in God and for God; and that means living in perfectly right relations with his fellow-men. This is the teaching of Jesus as to the nature and needs of man.

Now one word concerning the destiny of man. This I touch on very briefly here, simply because it is needed to complete the theme. I am not to go into it at any length. Jesus' conception of the world, remember,—I shall have occasion to speak of this in my next sermon,—his conception of the world is that of a conflict. There are two kingdoms,—one the kingdom of God and the other the kingdom of the devil; and everybody is subject to one of these powers or the other. He becomes subject to the kingdom of God simply by becoming good,—that is all. Jesus never teaches any doctrine of a repentance or conversion, in the theological sense: his repentance is simply a change of purpose, his conversion is the practical conversion of ceasing to love and serve the evil and beginning to love and serve the good,—that is all. Jesus teaches, however,—unless we are to twist his language out of all recognizable meaning,—he teaches that those who, at the last day, the “end of the age,” are found in the kingdom of God, are to enter into eternal felicity, and those who at that time are found members of the kingdom of the devil are

to share the destiny of the devil,—to go away into æonian, everlasting, eternal punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels. Here is the great appeal. He says to those who stood in fear of the authorities of the time, who did not dare to become his followers: "Fear not them that are able to kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I warn you whom you shall fear: fear him who, after he hath killed the body, has power to cast into Gehenna, the place of torment."

This, then, in brief and bold outline, is the teaching of Jesus concerning the origin, the nature, the condition, the needs, and the destiny of man. I wish you to turn with me now, and, as we did when we were considering Jesus' teaching concerning God, look for a few moments at the modifications of this doctrine concerning the nature of man which have been produced in the minds of people as the result of modern investigation and knowledge. What to-day do we believe about the origin, the nature, the condition, the needs, and the destiny of man? What part of the teaching of Jesus is vital in the life of this time? What part of it may we expect to remain, a permanent possession of the race?

In the first place, we do not share at all what we may presume to have been his belief, or, at any rate, was the belief of the people of his time, in regard to the origin of man. We hold to-day that man was not specially created, but that he is the natural product of the tree of life whose roots are in the far-off ages of the past. We have descended from animal ancestors. We bear the marks of this descent, not only in our bodies, which are very plain, but in our minds, in our moral natures, as well. We have come, then, by natural descent, from the lower forms of life on earth. But, mark you, friends, this does not, as is charged by many, leave God out of account: it only places God present, the Force,

the Life, the leading Power, the Guide, all the way up, from the beginning until to-day.

Next, what do we hold as to the nature of man? Is he a body without a soul, or has he a soul in his body, or has he a body and a soul and a spirit? The theosophists tell us that he is a complex compound of seven different parts. What do we know about him? Do we know anything? There are large numbers of agnostic scientists who are inclined to a belief that he is only a body; that what we call life is the product of organization; and that, when the organization crumbles and falls to pieces, that which was the life-force simply passes into some other form, and the individual ceases to be. Jesus believed, what I believe, that man is a dual being. I know of no proof that there are more than two parts to his nature. I do not believe, however, that man has a soul, as though, if you took the soul away from him, he would be a creature capable of having anything. You *have* something apart from what you *are*,—you can have money; you can have this thing or that,—but you do not speak of *having* what you *are*. I rather prefer to say, “Man *is* a soul.” And I believe we are on the eve of demonstrating this dual nature of man. Man is a soul, capable of passing out of this body as a moth slips out of his chrysalis, and enters on a higher and grander stage of life. This I believe. This I believe, as I said, we are on the eve of proving in a purely scientific way. This, so far as we can get at the thought of Jesus, was his own teaching.

But we have largely modified our ideas as to the condition of man in one way. We indeed recognize the fact that man dies, that he is subject to diseases and pain, that he is ignorant and breaks God’s laws, and that he wilfully does that which he knows is wrong. We recognize, then, what is commonly called sin. But our explanation for it is not that

which was held two thousand years ago, not that which Jesus would probably have given, had he been asked the question. I believe that Darwinism or evolution accounts in a perfectly natural and sufficient way for the observed facts of suffering and wrong. Man dies as naturally as he is born: it is an incident of his career. But why does man do wrong, why does he suffer? We are so constituted that the nerves are capable of thrilling either with pain or with ecstasy alike. If we break the laws of God, the laws of life, whether wittingly or unwittingly, we of necessity suffer. And that we should suffer in that way is not an evil to be accounted for, but a good,—the very condition of life and growth itself. But why moral evil? If we look back to our animal ancestry, and remember that man is ignorant, remember that man is passionate, remember that man is selfish, and that these three qualities are natural, necessary inheritances from our ancestry, we need go no further to account for the existence of what we call wrong. Passion masters a man; and for the time reason is dethroned. Man is ignorant, and breaks these laws—the laws on which his own happiness and the welfare of others depend—through ignorance. Man is selfish, and many a time determines to gain or carry his end, no matter who suffers, no matter who is crushed under the wheels of his triumphal advance. All these qualities and more we have inherited from our animal ancestry; and the progress of civilization is nothing else than the climbing up out of the animal into brain and heart and soul; and the progress of civilization anywhere is marked by the degree to which man has attained of being able to master, instead of being mastered by, these animal forces.

What does man need, then? Do we agree with Jesus here? Apart from the one point that I referred to, of his

seeming to think that it was necessary or wise to keep the Jewish law, we do agree most grandly with what seems to me the most magnificent part of the teaching of Jesus. We believe that man is a being of dignity, with brain power, with will power, capable of studying and capable of finding out the laws of God and man, capable of discerning the way of life. We believe that he has will that shall enable him to walk in that way; and we believe that all he needs for salvation is to look up to this perfect ideal of the Father in heaven, and listen to and obey the words of Jesus when he says, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." He assumes that the people he speaks to are capable of obeying this sublime demand; and we believe, not that we can do it instantly, this moment, but that we can walk along the path, ever broadening and growing finer and fairer day by day and year by year, until we are wrought over into the likeness of the divine. This part of the teaching of Jesus, then, is eternal.

We differ, again, as to the destiny of the race. We have perfected our conception of what it means to have a perfect Father in heaven, and so we hold that he is the perfect Father of all, the evil as well as the good; and that, by as much as he is mighty and wise and loving, by so much his whole Deity is pledged, sometime, somewhere, to lift and lead and give blessedness to the lowest and the most utterly outcast. The grandest part, then, of the teaching of Jesus, the spiritual, high part of it, remains. Those ideas which he shared with the people of his time,—many of them have passed away. But, still, in this matter, as to the nature, the constitution, and the need of man, we can walk after him, still recognizing him as leader in this direction, as showing the light and the way of life.

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT THE KING- DOM OF GOD.

TAKING human nature as it is, it has been inevitable in the past that men should have dreamed of ideal conditions of human society. They have looked abroad over the world, and they have seen that not only does death keep up its universal reign, but that there are countless evils that do not seem to be an essential part of this human life of ours. They have felt that the earth, the nourishing mother, was capable of furnishing supplies for all human wants, so that there should be no need of hunger, no need of people suffering from the lack of any of the ordinary comforts of life. They have noted also that the majority of human evils have sprung from either the ignorant, the passionate, or the selfish action of men themselves, and therefore are in their nature curable. And, since the age when men first dared to dream that He who sitteth on the throne of the universe must be good, must do right and desire right, they have naturally felt that this dream sometime and somewhere would be realized.

As I have had occasion to remind you, perhaps more than once, we find in different parts of the world different types of this ideal dream ; and sometimes we find that it is placed in the past as something which has existed, from which the race has fallen away, and sometimes it is located in the future as something that is to come either immediately or at some unknown period far away. And we find among the

same peoples both these types of dream : in the old classic world there were those who placed the Golden Age behind them, there were those who looked forward to a Golden Age as a possibility to come. And among the Hebrews we find precisely the same thing appearing. I wish you to note again, though I think I have also suggested this to you, that, contrary to the order of the records as they stand in the present Old Testament, the earliest hope, the earliest thought, that we find on the part of the Hebrew race is the forward-looking one. The early prophets, the earliest writers, that we find, always place the ideal condition of things in the future, something to be striven for, realized by coming into ever better and better relations with the Divine. But there grew up, on the part of a certain section of Hebrew thinkers, at any rate, a belief, probably borrowed from without, that there had been a perfect condition of things in the past as well, though they did not give up their dream of the future. There was an Edenic condition at the beginning; and a similar condition was to be looked for as crowning the end of this period of human history here on earth.

I wish now to point out to you how naturally this dream on the part of the Hebrews sprang up, how naturally it assumed its grand proportions and its preponderating influence in Hebrew history, and as deciding the destiny of that wonderful people. It is true that we find stories of Messiahs, stories of the expected coming of divine deliverers, among other peoples. We find them among the aborigines of this country, though we are not quite sure but that they may have been influenced by Christian thought. We find them among the ancient Hindus: we find them, as I said, in different parts of the world. But there is no nation on earth over which this ideal dream has had such an influence, such a decisive influence, as among the Hebrews. I wish now to

call your attention to certain phases of Hebrew belief which attended the development of this unique and preponderating idea.

As I have told you before, the Jews had no practical belief in any future life. All their good was to be here. Long life, health, property, honor, friends, a large family, all these things which go to make up the happiness of life here beneath the blue sky,—these constituted that on which they fixed their almost exclusive attention. Those who died went down to the underworld, which was a world of shadow and practical unconsciousness. All the threats of the Old Testament are threats connected with this life, all the promises are promises connected with this life. Now, then, you see that to a people who believed that they were the chosen of their God Yahveh, and who believed that all the good things of the world were to be found in this life,—to such a people would naturally come this expectation of the passing away of the evils under which they suffered and the coming of an ideal time. They were accustomed to believe that, when a man suffered,—if a man were sick, if a man's children were suddenly cut off, or his friends destroyed by a pestilence, or his property taken away from him,—they were accustomed to believe that these of necessity were punishments, were judgments, on the part of their God. And yet, as time went on, this philosophy began to be shaken. I have called your attention to the Book of Job as an illustration of this; and I need to recur to it here again. The Book of Job is one of the great poems of the world. It is not history: it is drama. Job is represented as a man unblemished, of righteous character and truth, a man who had been singularly honored and blessed, when suddenly everything is stripped away from him. His property is carried off, his children put to death, and he himself afflicted with a noisome

disease. And his friends gather about him,—those who hold the old ideas, and have been accustomed to regard themselves as his friends,—and they say: “You must have secretly been doing wrong. Now tell us what you have done; repent of your sins, that these evils may pass away from you.” And Job indignantly repudiates the charge. He declares that he has been just and true, and that these things are not signs of any secret sin that he has committed; and he longs for the possibility of coming to the very seat of his divine Judge, and appealing to him to establish his shaken reputation. This book, then, sets forth the belief of the writer that there must be some other explanation of these sufferings than that the person has been guilty of wrong. But, anyway, here is this condition of evil; and if God be just and true, and if good is to come in this world, and not in some other world, then, logically and of necessity, there sprang up a belief that God would appear in due time, deliver the world from evils, and set his people on high in the position of distinction and power which they should have deserved. They naturally placed themselves at the centre of this new hope; for Yahveh was not only their God, but in course of time they came to believe that he was the one and only God of the universe, and then their sympathies broadened out.

This expectation of the kingdom included a great many different things at different periods of their history. They had been persecuted and trampled down by heathen nations; and so you will find some of their writers describing the coming of this King, by way of vengeance on these people who had been their time-long enemies. He was to dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel: he was to bring all these rebellious peoples into subjection to the rightful authority of Yahveh and his people. And then, on the other

side, their expectation broadened out as they came to believe that their God was not theirs only, but the God of all the world. They began to dream that in the good time coming not only should they enter into peace, but that every kingdom and tribe under the whole heaven should share this divine deliverance; and so they came to expect that in them should all the nations of the earth be blessed. Magnificent dream!

At every epoch of their history, no matter what it was,—a temporary prosperity or a disastrous downfall,—they felt that they were taking one new step towards the realization of their age-long dream. They believed that the time must speedily come, and could not much longer be delayed. The history of the kingdom of David had been their ideal period,—the time of their greatest prosperity, the time of their most wide-spread power; and it stood at last as the type of this ideal kingdom. And so, when they looked forward, they believed that in some form, in some way, this kingdom of David was to be revived, only extended and glorified. I wish you to note now two or three facts which gave more and more definite shape to this expectation on their part.

They had been in subjection to foreigners for a long period of time. For a little while they would rebel, under some leader who claimed to be sent by the divine prerogative to restore their ancient glory, only to be crushed again. As Jesus is reported to have said, there were no end of false Christs who came and made their claims and led the people into revolt; but the power of the Cæsars was too strong for them, and they were trodden down again under the heel of the Roman legions. But ever the hope grew. Only they began to feel that the reason why it was so long delayed was that the people were not good enough; they had not strictly enough kept the Mosaic law; there was some divine condi-

tion which they had not fully met. But so soon as they could obey the divine command as a people, so soon as they became righteous enough and devoted enough, then their God would appear with mighty hand and outstretched arm for their deliverance. And so we find among the people little sects of Separatists and Purists growing up; we find the Pharisaic power increasing; we find the tendency ever to a stricter and more careful interpretation of the law. That is, they were feeling about in every sort of way to find out what it was that they had done or what it was that they had not done that caused their hope so long to delay.

As to the beauty and glory of this ideal hope, I wish to read you one or two selected passages from the prophets, giving you a general hint as to what they expected; for they expected not only goodness to appear, but they expected the ancient curse of the earth, that had made it grow thorns and briars, that had made the wild beasts hostile towards each other and towards men,—they expected these also to pass away. Most of these passages which I shall read are from Isaiah:—

“There shall come forth a rod out of the stock of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of its roots, and the spirit of Yahveh shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahveh; and he shall smell a sweet savor in the fear of Yahveh, and shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor give sentence after the hearing of his ears. But with justice shall he judge the helpless, and give sentence with equity to the meek of the land; and he shall smite the land with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. Justice shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. Then shall the wolf lodge with the lamb, and the leopard lie

down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the calf. And the sucking child shall stroke the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall stretch his hand upon the ball of the basilisk's eye. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the land shall be full of the knowledge of Yahveh, as the waters cover the sea."

This is one of those beautiful old prophetic visions of the ideal time towards which they were looking.

When Jesus appeared, the air was all full of these expectations. Apocalypse after apocalypse had been published, book after book, announcing that the time was close at hand, that all the signs of the age indicated it. And now right here, note,—for you need to understand what that phrase means when you see it in the New Testament,—when you read about the "end of the world," or the "end of the age," or the coming in of this new age, you must understand that the Jews divided all time into two parts, one preceding the epoch of the coming of the Messiah, and the other that which followed. And the end of the age, or the end of the world, does not mean at all the end of this earth, does not mean at all the end of this solar system: it means simply the end of this first epoch of human history and the ushering in of the glory of that which should follow the appearance of the Messiah. You are aware as to the meaning of the word "Messiah": let me note it in passing. It is simply "the anointed," the one on whose head the oil had been poured; for this was the method by which a man was set apart as king over his people. The Anointed, then, is the Messiah; and the Messiah, in Greek, is Christ. So you are to remember that wherever the word "Christ"

appears it is not a personal name: it is the name of an office. It is Jesus the Christ, not Jesus Christ, in the New Testament everywhere; Jesus the Messiah, the anointed one. The air, then, as I said, was all full of this expectation. And now I wish to note first what the Gospels say as to the coming of this Messiah, as applied to Jesus of Nazareth; and then I shall raise the question as to what Jesus himself said about it.

They believed, undoubtedly, that Jesus was the Messiah who had been expected for long ages, who had been obscurely or plainly foretold by all the prophets. At first they were greatly shocked that he should have been put to death. You remember that air of wondering disappointment indicated by the words of the two disciples on their walk to Emmaus, when Jesus overtakes them, as the story is told, without their knowing who he was. As they fall to talking of him, they say, "We trusted that this had been he who was to have redeemed Israel." They had given up their faith at first. Then the disciples began to reread the prophecies; and it came upon them at last that perhaps the suffering Messiah was the one who had really been foretold, although they had misunderstood the indications of the old writers. And then, of course, sprang up naturally the belief that he was to come again. This first coming had been that he might suffer, that he might die as an atonement for human sins; and then in a little while he was to appear again in glory, to redeem those who had believed in him and to put his enemies to eternal confusion. Note, then, the kingdom that they looked for in the early New Testament times was this: he was to return and reign over the earth.

When was he to return, at what time? Immediately, before this generation shall have passed away. The whole New Testament, if you read it with this idea, is on tiptoe with

expectation. "Watch! It may be at midnight or cock-crowing or in the morning. You do not know when it will be. Watch, then!" The parables are full of it: everywhere is this expectation of Jesus' immediate coming. They put into his own lips the saying, "There shall be two people working together in the field: one shall be taken, as a member of this new kingdom, the other left. Two women grinding together at the same mill: one of them taken, the other left." It should come so suddenly that, if you are on the house-top, you are not to come down to take anything in the house; if you are at work, do not go back to the house after your garment. It is to come like lightning, that appeareth in one part of the heaven, and shineth even to the other part.

What were the signs of its coming? They did not suppose that this old, established, entrenched, age-long kingdom of Satan was going to be overthrown without one last final struggle. So there were to be wars and rumors of wars, pestilences, desolations; there were to be earthquakes and upheavals of every kind. Note their thought, their belief in regard to the universe: the stars are to fall from heaven to earth, like unripe figs when the tree is shaken. The sun was to be darkened, the moon was to be turned into blood. There were to be these tremendous portents, indicating the approach of the end.

But where was the kingdom to be, when it was established? No trace anywhere in the New Testament of its being in heaven; no trace of its being off in any other planet. It is to be here: this earth, purified by fire or renovated in some remarkable way, was to be the scene of the establishment of this new and perfect condition of human affairs. Paul says, indeed, that the dead in Christ were to rise first. Those that were living were to be changed suddenly when the trumpet sounded, and were to be caught up to meet the

descending Lord in the air. But, after these had been raised, the kingdom was to be established here, on this old earth. Jerusalem was to be its capital and centre. It was to include all the good in every nation; and it was to last, some thought for a thousand years, some said for seven thousand years. Men who should be alive in this new order of things were to be like the angels; there was to be no more marrying and no more giving in marriage; there was to be no more disease; there was to be no more death. The men were to live for a thousand years, or so long as this Messianic reign should last. At the end of that time there may have been some dream of this kingdom being surrendered into the hands of the Father, and entering upon another order of things.

This was the general expectation, given in rough outline, on the part of the early church. Now—and this is a most important question—did Jesus himself believe just this, or were these ideas put into his mouth by his biographers? You are to remember that the first three Gospels were written somewhere from forty to fifty years after his death, and that the Fourth Gospel was written towards the middle of the second century. There was time, you see, for changed ideas. There were no written records of any single word that Jesus had said, no report made at the time. There was plenty of opportunity for coloring his ideas.

Dr. James Martineau, the famous Unitarian preacher of England, and one of our greatest critical scholars, takes the ground that Jesus is not to be supposed to have entertained these Messianic expectations at all. By his critical method he sweeps away at once all the Messianic claims that had gathered about him, and takes the ground that they were thrust upon him by the imaginations and expectations of his followers and disciples. A clergyman, a friend of mine,

as we were discussing this question three or four years ago, said to me that, if he thought Jesus really expected to appear again in the clouds of heaven, accompanied by the angels, to suddenly and miraculously wind up the present condition of affairs, he should lose all respect for him. I have never been quite able to see why. We have not lost all respect for Sir Matthew Hale, one of the greatest and best judges England ever produced, because he shared the belief of his age in the reality of witchcraft. We have not lost all respect for Newton, the discoverer of the law of gravity, because he shared with his age a great many fantastic and unreal scientific theories. We have not lost all respect for Dante because he believed in the doctrines of hell, purgatory, and heaven, which he has so magnificently and minutely outlined. We have not lost all respect for Augustine because he believed that dead men had been raised to life in the next town to where he lived and in his own age. Why should we lose all respect for the great Nazarene if he shared the common beliefs of his age? It seems to me that, when you find a man living the life of his time, educated according to the ideas of his time, sharing the general beliefs of his time, and who also transcends in some grand, some magnificent way, what were the prevailing thoughts of his age, he only takes on an added grandeur and greatness because rooted in the life and the common beliefs of his people. There was no thought at the time of Jesus of anything that we mean by modern science; there was no conception of natural law; there was no idea that anything was being infringed, any disorder created, by a belief in miracle. It was perfectly natural for Jesus to share the beliefs of his time that his Father ruled with absolute and arbitrary authority over all the earth and in heaven as well. We are not shocked to hear Jesus, in the trustfulness

of his heart, say to one of his disciples, who proposed to pull his sword and fight rather than have him arrested, "Do you not think that, if I chose, I could now pray my Father, and he would immediately send me more than twelve legions of angels?" There is nothing out of the common in ideas like this at that time. I cannot help thinking, as I carefully study the gospel records, that Jesus did believe that he was the Messiah, and that he did expect to come again to deliver the earth from its evils. Let me indicate to you, as clearly and simply as I may, what I am convinced was in the mind of Jesus.

I think we are safe in rejecting the later story which says that Jesus was proclaimed the Messiah at the time of his baptism by John the Baptist. I do not think there is sufficient reason for us to accept that. John had come, claiming to be, not the Messiah, but the forerunner, preaching the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and saying, "The kingdom of God is at hand," and telling all those that he could get to come and listen to his teaching to be ready for it. "It is beginning: it is coming, and coming soon. Be ready for it." That was the preaching of John. Jesus came, and immediately after the death of John began to preach the same gospel,— "The kingdom of God is at hand." As he went on preaching, he grew in the estimation of his disciples,— he grew, perhaps, in his own estimation as he came closer and closer in thought and sympathy to the heart and the life of the Divine. There began to be questions arising as to whether this wonderful man from Nazareth was not the expected Messiah. In one memorable scene in the Gospels Jesus is represented as talking with his disciples, as though he would test them, to see what they thought about it. He said to the disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" And the answer came, "Some say

the Messiah, some, one of the old prophets come back again to prepare the way of the coming kingdom." Then Jesus turns to them and says, "But whom do ye say that I am?" as though he wished to test their feeling. And then Peter is represented as acting as spokesman, and making that remarkable declaration, "We believe thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed of God." But Jesus does not say then whether he accepts it or not. He tells them not to make any talk about it, not to tell anybody outside that they hold any such opinion, either because he was not quite convinced in his own mind as yet or because, if he was convinced, he did not think the time was come for making public proclamation of the fact. But, as time went on, I believe that he stood ready at last to assume that he was the appointed one of God who was sent for the deliverance of his people. And then, at last, he went with his disciples to Jerusalem; for the Messiah was expected to appear and make his proclamation there on the occasion of one of the great national feasts. Out of that proclamation, out of the claims which the Gospels everywhere represent as having been made, comes the conflict with the chief priests, then with the Roman authorities, and then his death. If he intimated to his disciples his belief in his own Messiahship, then it seems to me perfectly natural that the events that followed his death should have taken the course that they did. But, if Jesus had said plainly that he was not the Messiah, or if he had never said that he was, it is very difficult for me to understand how we should find, immediately after his crucifixion, the whole country wild with the idea that he had made the claim, or that, at least, the office belonged to him. I cannot help thinking, then, that Jesus expected along the line of his thought and teaching the deliverance of his people should come; and, if this was the

method, why should he not suppose that was the occasion? For, if the God of the universe was the kind of God, ruling the world in the arbitrary fashion, that Jesus believed in, why should he not make bare his arm, and appear for the deliverance of his people? If he could, why should he not renovate the world, and bring about this blessed condition of affairs? It seems to me, taking the point of view of the age, and the simple trust of Jesus in his heavenly Father, that it was the most natural expectation in the world; and I, for the life of me, cannot see how it touches at all the integrity of his thinking or the grandeur of his intellectual position or power.

But he did not come. The people expected him, got ready for him as they supposed. The years passed by, and he did not come. The heavens have been silent from that day to this. No sign of the descending city that John saw in the vision; no sign of a bursting through of the blue or the sounding of trumpets to wake those who have been long dead. The old order of the world has gone on after precisely the same fashion as before. Shall we, therefore, think that this was a baseless dream?

Friends, I am one of those who believe that this old-time vision was born out of the instinctive expectations and beliefs and hopes of the human heart, and that it only put into visionary shape the whisper, the promise, of the Eternal. I believe this can be more than realized, and that it is to be in the ages that are to come,—only along the lines of perfectly natural progress and good. It is not to come suddenly. And here I think that some of our modern dreamers are as far from the right as any of those of ancient time. I cannot share, for example, with Mr. Bellamy and with thinkers like him, the belief that the perfect condition of the world can be brought to pass by a reorganization of human

society. As I have had occasion to tell you more than once, the character of the aggregation is determined by the character of the individuals. You cannot put together imperfect units, and arrange them so that a perfect aggregate shall result. So the first thing to be done must be for each man and each woman in the world to come into better relations with the divine conditions of human life.

Along this line, and along this alone, can come the human growth that we dream of, and which shall result in the realization of that dream. But, on the other hand, let us not overlook the mighty truth which some of these false dreamers are on the track of. We can do something by organization. What? You know that, on the part of the animals and the birds, the lower orders of life on earth, they have no power to change their environment. The bird will build as good a nest as he finds an opportunity to build and materials with which to construct it. You give him a better place and better materials, and he will build a better nest; but he cannot himself create the better place or materials. But we can. There is the difference between lower orders of life and the human. We can change, can reconstruct, can uplift, our environment, and make it easier for men to be good, for men to be true, for men to outlive and trample under foot the low and the animal and the mean in human nature. Professor Lester F. Ward of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington has published a remarkable work called "Dynamic Sociology." It is devoted almost entirely to this, which is the great belief to which he has given his life, so far as it touches the affairs of society,—that society is capable of conferring upon the lowest and poorest all the good, all the intelligence, all the happiness, which it so far has attained. We can lift up the level of the lowest; we can diffuse abroad intelligence, and make it general; we can

reconstruct the conditions of life. And so we can actively help on the coming of this kingdom of God on earth; for this kingdom of God is nothing else but perfect human conditions.

What do we mean when we dream of a perfect condition? We mean, in the first place, that man shall have an adequate shelter, what we call a home. We mean that he shall be able to clothe himself decently, fittingly, appropriately. We mean that he shall have enough to eat,—nutritious, healthful food, so as to give him the utmost vigor of body and mind. But is that all? No, that is a perfect enough condition for an animal; but a man is something more than an animal. We believe that in this home there should be food for thought, and that man should be released in some way from so much of the drudgery of life as shall give him time to find out that he has a brain, and to give the brain time to think, to become acquainted with the best thoughts of the world. We mean also that the artistic nature shall have room and time and place for development; for man is a being who takes delight in beauty of form and color and sound,—all the beauties of the world. And he becomes more and more human as he is able to rise into the realm of this beauty. It means also that man is an affectional being; and he should have time to cultivate the love of all that is fair and all that is sweet and all that is true. And, then, it means that man is the finite child of the Infinite Spirit and Life of the universe, and that he is complete only when he has grown up to a consciousness of that, and lives and walks along this high table-land of ideal and expectation,—lives on the level of an immortal hope; believes that he is a man and a child of God, and tries to live it out. Now, who are the men in the modern world who can do something to help on this condition of affairs? They are

the men who recognize this ideal themselves, and, no matter how far they have progressed in their personal development, believe that to live means something more than getting things for themselves.

I think you can roughly divide men and women in this world into two classes. In the better class you find those who think it is worth while to help the world to be better, and who are doing what they can to be better themselves and to help other people be better. On the other hand, you can find the people who are interested simply in themselves, who are not purposely and positively trying to do any good. Of course, it is the first class that helps on the kingdom of God. And, if we could only find out what it means to be a man, we should find out that those in this class are the ones who get the most out of life themselves, as well as the ones who give the most to others.

Now, at the end, I have reserved one point, touching on the teaching of Jesus, which it is of the utmost importance that we should clearly understand, in order that we may set Jesus where he belongs in our thinking, in our reverence, and in our life. I passed it on purpose at the time I was discussing Jesus' ideas of the kingdom. Now let me call your attention to that significant fact. There is a kernel in Christianity, if we can ever get it adopted as the definition of Christianity, which is capable of making it an eternal religion. Jesus taught, I think, that he was to be the king, that the kingdom was to come immediately, that it was to be here on this earth. But what were the conditions of membership in that kingdom, according to the teaching of Jesus? Jesus said nothing whatever about any creed, nothing whatever about any atonement, nothing whatever about any substituted sin or righteousness. He said absolutely nothing about any condition of membership in this kingdom such as

nearly every church on earth makes the condition of its membership.

If Jesus should appear at the door of any old-time church in Christendom, and offer as his credentials the one thing which he said was the only condition of membership in the kingdom of God, he could not be admitted. For what did he say? Only one condition,—goodness. Nothing else. Love, love in the heart, love in the life, flowing out in service. In that famous judgment scene, which at least we may think is true in its representation of the idea and teaching of Jesus, whatever we may think of the dress of it,—in that scene, who are those that he places on the right hand of the Judge? Those who have given the cup of cold water, those who have visited the sick and the people in prison, those who have been kind, those who have been helpful, those who have done something in the way of service to their fellow-men. Not a word about any belief, not a word about any sacrament, not a word about any apostolical succession, not a word about any laying on of hands, not a word about any institution of any kind whatsoever. And he says, “Not those who say so much about it—those who talk, ‘Lord, Lord’—are to be admitted, but those who have done the will of my Father in heaven; and here are thousands of you who think you are going to enter into that kingdom, but I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom, while you are thrust out.” It is the good, and only the good, who are to be admitted into the kingdom of God. And this, do you not see, friends, is eternal, universal truth? For this means that those who have discerned and have obeyed the laws of God, and have thus become good, are of necessity in God’s kingdom. No matter what church they belong to, no matter

what nation, no matter what age, no matter what their color, no matter what their social conditions,—these are citizens in the kingdom of God.

And here, friends, we can gladly take Jesus for leader ; and here we can rightly and reverently lift him to a pinnacle of reverence and fame that belongs to no other soul perhaps in the history of the race. For I do not know any other great religious leader of the world who proclaimed so broadly and so universally that eternal and changeless condition as did he. If others are found, no matter,—the more, the better. But that does not take away from the unique significance of the fact that he taught it in an age of narrowness, in an age of bitterness, in an age of ceremonial, such as the world has hardly ever seen. He taught this grand redeeming, saving truth, which belongs to all mankind. Here, then, we can follow him ; and here, no matter what he may have believed about the method or the time of the kingdom,—here we can stand united with him in this grand idea as to that which forms the central thought and the eternal principle of his dream.

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT PRAYER.

THE popular idea about prayer, perhaps it is safe to say, in all ages, in all parts of the world, has been substantially the same. It has sprung up naturally, out of the conception of the world that has been held, and the thought of the relations in which God stands to the world, his method of governing it. It has always and everywhere been supposed that prayer might be directly, immediately answered, provided the prayer were a proper one, provided the proper conditions were complied with, provided the proper influence could be brought to bear upon the Deity. Of course, you will understand that thoughts about this, like thoughts about every great subject, change with the passing ages, being barbaric among barbaric people, being crude and ignorant among ignorant and undeveloped people, changing as the thought of the world and as ideas about God were changing in the growth and spread of civilization. But the point I wish you to note right here is that in almost all the past substantially similar conceptions have been held concerning God's method of governing the world, no matter what people's ideas about the world may have been, whether they regarded the earth as a flat surface or a sphere, whether they knew about only a small part of its surface or had explored the whole ; no matter what their thought about God may have been, whether they believed in many gods or in one, whether they believed that God was only the God of

their little tribe or people, the God of their special religion, or whether they thought of him as the God of all mankind. The point is here : people, in almost all ages until very recent times, have looked upon God as living somewhere away from the world, as outside nature, and as ruling the worlds and all peoples who inhabit all worlds as a despot, a czar,—ruling autocratically, ruling, as we say, just as he pleased ; able to do a thing or not to do it, to give or withhold, according as he might will at the time.

Let us glance for a moment at a figure, by way of illustration ; for it is noteworthy that in almost every stage of the world's civilization people have figured the celestial government after the general type of the earthly government under which they lived. Almost always God has been a chief, a patriarch, a despot, a king, a sultan, according to the type of government under which the people have lived and which has naturally shaped their thinking. Now, you are aware that in most governments the king is difficult of access, it is hard to get at him. This is perfectly natural. The Emperor of Germany or the Czar of Russia could not possibly carry on the work of governing his empire, dealing with every individual who might wish to come with a plea. Of necessity, then, he has been surrounded by his court, his ministers, his cabinet, his intermediaries, those that have stood between him and the individuals making up his empire. And naturally enough, too, if a person wished to gain the favor of the king or Kaiser, he must first gain the favor of the minister, or some one who stands near his person. Perhaps he must bring a gift, he must bring influence to bear, he must get favor at court ; and then he can expect to reach the ear of the ultimate power on whose simple will the decision of his case depends. You will find that after this type most of the thoughts of men have been shaped concerning this matter of prayer.

If you go to ancient Greece or Rome, and see the people there presenting their petitions to their gods, you will find that always they come with a gift: there must be a sacrifice of some sort, an offering made. And, more than in almost any other case, the deities are represented as angry with their people because they fail to bring the desired offerings. You will note in the poets, such as Virgil and Homer, that sometimes the gods pray to each other, because the universe was divided up into different departments. If Juno, for example, wished to do harm to the hated people of Troy, she goes to one of the gods,—the god of the wind, for example, who has power over the seas,—and offers him a gift, in order that he may let loose his tempests and destroy the ships of her enemies. This, then, is the type of prayer that you find throughout almost all the pagan world, in every nation. The people must make an offering: they must be led or directed by the priesthood as to how acceptably they may come into the presence of their deity and gain the particular thing that they desire.

Before touching a little on the popular methods of prayer, as they prevail even to-day in the modern world, I wish to note some Hebrew thoughts concerning it, and then come down to the New Testament time.

There is no special feature that marks off Hebrew thought from that of the ancient world, excepting that sometimes it is a little simpler, and that, in the later developments of the people, it is loftier and more purely spiritual than we find it in most of the pagan nations. But let me give you a few illustrations, taken almost at random out of the Old Testament, of the prevailing ideas of prayer among the Hebrews. The first one that I think of is the prayer of Joshua. You remember the famous story, where he is engaged in battle with his enemies, and is beginning to get an advantage over

them, when the daylight threatens to depart, because the sun is about to set; and he prays to God, and the sun is suspended in its course, "and hastens not to go down" as the old narrative tells us, "for about a whole day,"—that is, the day was nearly twice as long as usual, in order that he might have an opportunity to overcome his foes. Now, this is not at all unnatural with the conception which was then held concerning the world. This earth was the great body in the universe; the sun, the moon and the stars were only little lights arranged for the service of man. And God was the God of the Hebrew people; and the one chief thing he cared for was their success, their prosperity, their growth, their victory over all their enemies. Why not, then, at the prayer of this hero, hold this light in the heavens for a longer time than usual, in order that he might see his way? Perfectly natural and simple, with the old ideas of the universe, the old conception of God, and his method of governing the world. Take the prayer of Elijah. You remember the story, how he puts to confusion the assembled prophets of Baal by asking God to do what their god could not; that is, send down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice which he had prepared. And then James, in the New Testament, recalls another instance of prayer on the part of the old prophet,—how, at a certain time, he prayed God that it might not rain. He did this as a judgment upon the enemy of Jehovah, the false king Ahab; and it rained not for three years and a half, and of course a wide-spread famine and desolation was the result. And then the prophet prayed, and the rains came; and the ordinary course of nature was resumed. Again, nothing strange, nothing unnatural, at that time, with their common and generally accepted ideas of God's method of governing the world. Then take the prayer of Elisha, immediately following after Elijah, his suc-

cessor. He prays for the son of the Shunamite woman, who had died, and God, at the request of the prophet, raises him to life, and gives him back well to his mother. And, as typical of the general idea, I ask you to direct your attention for a moment to that wonderful prayer attributed to Solomon on the occasion of the dedication of the temple. Undoubtedly, Solomon did not offer it: it is the product of a later age and of a later and higher type of thought. But it represents, fairly enough, what was the popular conception of prayer to God. It implies that God is able, at will, to send famine, pestilence, mildew, blight, or to withhold them; he is able to give his children victory over their enemies or to deliver them into their power; he is able to accomplish whatever he will for his people,—withhold the rain or send it, deliver them to all sorts of evil or rescue them from any power that threatens their welfare. In other words, all through the ancient Hebrew history, God is represented as governing the world in this arbitrary fashion; and so, if a Hebrew brought his offering to the temple, he might expect that his prayer would be heard in heaven, and answered according to his wish.

When we come to the New Testament time, do we pass out of this into a higher thought about God? So far as the ordinary writers of the New Testament are concerned, we do not. James teaches that "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." He says, "If any are sick among you,"—he does not say anything about calling a physician, anything about any natural methods of treatment or cure,—he says, You are to send for the elders of the church, and they are to anoint the sick person with oil and pray for him, "and God will raise him up." This is the conception of the power of prayer taught by the apostle James. And if you read the beliefs of all the other New Testament

writers, outside of Jesus himself, you will find that generally this same idea prevails,—God the arbitrary king of the world, God ready to do for us whatsoever we desire, if we pray hard enough, if we pray long enough, if we are properly interceded for, if the right influence can be brought to bear upon him.

And all through the New Testament, outside of the teachings of Jesus,—and this is a point worthy of careful note,—the doctrine of intercession in prayer is held and taught. Paul, in Romans, speaks of the Holy Spirit as interceding for us, “with groanings which cannot be uttered,” because we do not know how to pray for such things as we ought to pray for. And John represents Jesus as setting forth this principle of intercession. Now, I wish you to note very carefully, and right here, the difference, the broad distinction, between the representation of Jesus as given us in the Gospel of John and the same Jesus as he appears in the simpler traditions of the first three Gospels. One of the great difficulties of the critics of the past has been to suppose that these two persons could be the same, the Jesus of John is so entirely different from the Jesus of the synoptics, in his methods, in his words, in his character, in his ideas, in his ways. And the difference is nowhere more marked than in this matter of prayer. I do not like to think that it is possible that Jesus should have prayed as John represents him as doing just before the raising of Lazarus. He puts into his mouth the words: “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but this I said for the sake of the people that stand by, that they might know that thou hast sent me.” He represents the great Nazarene as posing, at a time like that, for effect: “I said this, not because I needed to say it to thee, but because of the people who stand by, that they might be impressed.”

And all the way through John represents Jesus as saying that, if you ask anything in his name, it shall be granted.

Now, I wish to turn to the teaching of Jesus himself. It is very little. In Mark you find almost nothing. In Luke and Matthew is the main body of what Jesus is reported to have said on this great subject of prayer. I wish now to note the main characteristics of Jesus' teaching concerning the matter of prayer, and see how in the main they transcend, rise above, not only the ordinary conceptions of his own time, but how they rise above the popular ideas even of the present day. Jesus, as a teacher of prayer, is yet away beyond the Church that goes by his name.

In the first place, note what he says in regard to public prayer: "And, when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues and in the corner of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." That is, that kind of public prayer which has prevailed all over the whole earth is condemned in the teaching of the Nazarene. You go into a Mahometan country, and you will find a display of prayer everywhere. Whenever the prayer-hour comes, no matter where the man may be, he assumes the attitude of prayer, on the public street or anywhere, and goes through his devotions in the eyes of men. And the people who claimed to be specially devoted to God and religion in the time of Jesus, in Jerusalem and throughout Judea, were accustomed to the same thing,—they prayed, as he said, in the synagogues and on the street corners; they made a parade of their religion. I do not think that Jesus condemns in these words that kind of public

prayer which consists in the attempt, on the part of a minister, to voice the aspirations of his people. It is this prayer for the sake of ostentation, for the visible display of your piety, which he forbids. And in the comparative privacy of a little gathering of worshippers, when one man attempts to utter the heart of all, it does not seem to me to come within the condemnation which Jesus utters against the other type of public prayer.

The next feature of his teaching is his outright condemnation of long, repetitious, begging prayers. "When you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do ; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." It seems to me that, as you look over the world, you will find that people have entirely misinterpreted this idea of importunity, begging, teasing God for the things which they have wanted. As a part of that lesson which I read this morning in Luke, you remember that Jesus says that, when a friend goes to the house of another friend, and asks him, even after he is in bed, to rise and give him such necessities as he requires, he says this friend may not do it for friendship's sake ; but if you tease him long enough, because of your importunity, because of the trouble you put him to, and because it is less trouble to rise and do it than not to, he will grant your request. And then, in the case of the unjust judge, Jesus makes him say that this widow who comes importuning him for justice troubles him ; and, though he fears not God and does not regard man, yet to get rid of her importunity he will grant her request. But the idea of Jesus is not that this is a type for us to follow. God is not like this friend who will help us because we trouble him by our importunity. God is not like this unjust judge that will do justice because we weary him out with our petitions. But Jesus says, If you can gain influence in such cases as these, how much

more will your Father in heaven do those things that are necessary for you.

And, then, there is another feature of prayer that Jesus, in express terms, condemns; and that is the practice, so common on the part of ministers, and others, too, for that matter, of imparting information to God, as though he did not know what we need,—cataloguing the wants of the individual and of the world. He says, “Be ye not therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.” You do not need, therefore, to tell him all the long tale of your wants.

And the next point in regard to Jesus’ doctrine of prayer is that it shall be unselfish. Nowhere, I think, does he encourage men to believe that they can persuade God by any means to grant them the things which they selfishly desire. It is not “*My* Father who is in heaven,” it is “*Our* Father”; and it is not “Give *me* the things which I need,” but “Give *us* the things which we need, our daily bread. Lead *us* not into temptation, and deliver *us* from the evil one.” It is, all the way through, this sympathetic inclusion of all mankind in the common relation to God and the common attitude of need.

And, then, the other point, which I alluded to a moment ago, that nowhere in any prayer, as Jesus is represented as illustrating them for us in the first three Gospels, is there any hint of any intercession. Indeed, Jesus does not presume even himself to stand as the door-keeper of his Father. Not a word in the first three Gospels of any intercession or any need of intercession. He is the Father of all men, who knows what we have need of before we ask, and who is more ready to give than we are to receive.

You will note, of course, that Jesus shares the belief of his time concerning the arbitrary government of the universe

on the part of God. I do not think we should expect him to have any other idea than this, because, as I have been obliged to remind you several times in the course of these sermons, our modern thought about the universe had not then sprung up. Nobody had ever dreamed of such a conception of the world and of God's method of governing it as resides in the most intelligent minds to-day; for this is a thing which has been demonstrated only within these last few years,—a glimpse of it caught two or three hundred years ago, but the perfect demonstration reserved for this our own century. We need not wonder, then, I say, that Jesus expected God to grant arbitrarily, wilfully, so to speak, whatever he pleased, in response to the prayers of his children; for Jesus conceived of men as standing in this intimate personal relation to the Father, so that they had but to reach out their hands, and he, as directly and simply, could place in their hands the gifts that they had asked and which their necessity required. But in every other respect the teaching of Jesus concerning prayer is away above and beyond the ordinary idea of the ancient Hebrews, of all the ancient pagan world, above and beyond the ordinary conception of prayer as it is held to-day.

I cannot think that Jesus' teaching indorses the popular prayer-meeting idea of the church,—certainly not the interpretations of it with which I have been familiar in my religious experience,—people getting together, and supposing that, if they pray long enough and pray hard enough, and if enough people pray, they will be sure to gain the thing which they request. I remember hearing a famous evangelist some years ago, the Rev. A. B. Earle, say, and say over and over again, "Prayer is the power which moves the arm which moves the world." And I have heard people, in my boyhood, in prayer-meetings, time and time again, imply

that they were a great deal more anxious to have good things done in the world than God himself was. One phrase I shall never forget,—I have heard the same man use it in prayer at least a hundred times,—“It is time for thee, O God, to work.” That does not seem to me to be piety, but precisely the opposite. The implication, it seems to me, in many a prayer-meeting, is that, if we could only bring force enough, influence enough, to bear, if we could besiege the throne of grace long enough and hard enough, we would get God to come and save the world. Does God want to save men? Is he able? If he wants to and is able, then he will; if he wants to and is not able, then there is no use in asking him; if he is able and does not want to, there is little use in asking him.

This leads me then, friends, to consider the attitude toward this subject of prayer which, it seems to me, the reverent, religious man of the modern world must hold. What is that attitude? The doubts, the difficulties, about prayer in the modern world, are not the birth of infidelity. They are not the signs of impiety. They are the birth of a larger trust in God instead of a lack of trust. They are the birth of a changed conception of God's method of governing the world. I remember well my first doubts and difficulties, when I was a minister in the Congregational Church. They were not because I doubted God's goodness, but because I felt that he was so good that my teasing him to be good and to do good was an impertinence and an impiety. I remember saying once, to a lady who was discussing with me these incipient doubts and difficulties: “Suppose I should come to you and beg and plead with you to be good and kind to your children, to give them clothing to wear and food to eat, to educate them properly, what would you think of me? You would think that I was insulting. And, if God be perfectly

wise and almighty and perfectly loving, is it honoring him to beg and plead with him to be as good as we are, as kind as we are, as helpful as we are?" It is out of considerations like these that the questions concerning the need and the efficacy of prayer have sprung. And, then, it is out of an utterly changed conception of the universe, of God's relation to it, and of his method of governing it. I have had occasion to refer to this a great many times: I must refer to it again, however, as bearing on this subject.

When God was outside nature, in the thoughts of men, the world stood related to him as a kingdom does to a king. Why, then, of course, it was perfectly natural to go to him and ask him to interfere to do this, to stop that, to change the course and methods of the world's ongoing. But now, when we must think of God, if we think of him intelligently at all, as in nature, as through nature, with these natural forces and movements as the expression of his very person and life, as the methods of his working,—why, then, we are asking him to undo his own work. If we pray to him for rain, or when we pray to him to change the order of nature, or pray to him to work a miracle in regard to our own health, to heal a person who is sick, we are asking for a miracle as much as though we asked him to hurl Mount Washington into Boston Harbor. And we are asking him, as I said, to contradict himself. This ongoing of nature is the expression of his power, his wisdom, his goodness. We are presuming that we know better how the world ought to be governed than he does, and asking him to change this order. And then, as we rise out of our own selfishness, we are compelled to see that every single prayer of this kind must be a selfish prayer. I pray for rain because the soil of my garden or farm is sandy, and has become dry: that rain would be an injury, perhaps, to the man who lives half a mile away from

me. I pray for the wind to blow east when my ship is sailing in that direction, forgetting that the ship of somebody else is sailing west. I cannot pray for anything that interferes with the wise, orderly, loving government of God without praying that somebody else may be hurt for my benefit. It is considerations like these which hush the lips of many an impulsive prayer on the part of reverent and intelligent people in the modern world.

Yet, friends, is there no place for prayer? Are we enmeshed in this hard-and-fast network of natural forces, Nature, Fate, so that there is no longer any reason for the cry of the child-heart to the infinite Father-heart that still broods over the world? I believe, friends, that prayer is not antiquated, not outgrown, only we must bring our conceptions of it into intelligible relations with the intelligible world of law. I do not believe that we are to pray to God to work miracles, to pray to him to interfere with his natural order. I cannot accept the idea of Mr. Moody that a ship at sea is saved from wreck by a prayer-meeting held on the deck. I cannot believe that these things are real or belong in any world except that mythical world of the past, which the intelligent world is rapidly leaving behind.

But let us note for a moment: prayer is not all begging for gifts,—that, to my mind, is the least important part of it. Look at any ordinary prayer, and see the elements of which it is composed. There is first this conscious coming of the soul into personal contact with the Father; there is recognition of the divine goodness and expression of thankfulness for it; there is worship, the admiration of that which is higher and better than we; there is aspiration; there is consecration of the individual to the Father's will. There is the coming into line, so to speak, with God, getting into sympathy with his work, his high purpose, man co-operating with

the divine. Now, our changed conceptions of the universe, and our heightened thought of the goodness of God, are outgrowing and leaving behind only the smallest and the poorest part of prayer. I do not want to beg for things in the old sense. If I believed I had power to change God's order, I should never dare to pray again so long as I lived. I would not thrust my ignorant hand, if it were mighty, into the workings of the almighty wisdom and love.

But neither do I believe, friends, that prayer is nothing more than spiritual gymnastics, as it is sometimes declared to be. I believe prayer is a spiritual power, bringing us into relations of helpfulness towards God. Can I illustrate it in some way, so as to make clear to you what at least is my belief? I have a plant which I wish to place in such conditions that it shall grow, flourish, blossom, possibly bear fruit. I know that I can leave it in the shade or in a cold place or where the atmosphere is not kindly to it, and that it will either wither and die or grow very slowly and only half develop. I know that I can place it in favorable soil, that I can place it in favorable relations to God's sunshine and his rain, and so produce entirely another result. I do not interfere, I do not change the inevitable, unalterable working of God's law one whit. I intelligently recognize what God's laws are, and adapt myself to them: that is all. That is the way we accomplish everything in this universe. Whatever you do, in any department of thought or life, you do by getting into right relations with God's eternal forces, and letting them help you. Without God's help you can accomplish nothing: you cannot take another breath without his help; you cannot glance at another flower, or look in the eyes of a friend again, without God's instant, immediate, continuous help.

Every mill you build, every ship you sail, every factory

reared, every railway constructed, every line of wire that links us with some other city, is only a discovery of God's eternal laws and an adaptation of ourselves to the working of his power. He does it all for us. Now suppose that within the spirit realm, the realm into which I enter when I come into the conscious presence of God in prayer,—suppose that also is a world of inexorable and unalterable law, as much as we recognize this to be. What do I want in prayer? I want God's help in being a man. I want God's help and inspiration in trying to serve my fellows. I want power to face temptation, to live down that which is mean in me, to trample under foot that which would degrade me. I want these things. I want spiritual communion and spiritual help. Now, do you not see, friends, that coming thus consciously into the presence of God in prayer may be putting myself into right relations with God's spiritual forces, coming into accordance with his laws, just as really, just as truly, as in the case of taking my withered and stunted plant out into the sunshine and the rain? I come into accord with God's methods, and God's eternal and changeless laws work with me, and lift me and help me and comfort me, as they would not and could not if I did not come thus into right spiritual relations with them.

It seems to me, then, that prayer is not a thing of the past. Prayer is the point where the conscious soul comes into vital and loving contact with God. And in this highest, noblest meaning of prayer, I believe it shall be as permanent as God and the human soul.

And now note, at the end, that, with the one exception that Jesus did not recognize the natural order of the universe, which nobody in his age had dreamed of,—with that one exception, his teaching concerning prayer is almost precisely, in every direction, that which I have just been outlining this

morning. He transcended the past, Hebrew and pagan, he transcended his own age in his teaching here ; and he transcended that which is the common and popular teaching of his own church, as it assumes to be, in the modern world. His prayer was not selfish, not teasing, without any intercession, simply worshipful, recognizing the love and the wisdom of God, not daring to interpose his own will, but comprehended in all its magnificence and grandeur in those words with which at last he faces the cross, as he sees it looming before him in the garden of Gethsemane,— “ If this cup may not pass from me, thy will be done.”

JESUS AS TO WEALTH AND POVERTY.

FOLLOWING my usual custom of having a background for the teachings of Jesus, represented by the beliefs of his people before his time, I ask your attention first to the teaching of the Old Testament concerning wealth and poverty. There is hardly more than one thing that I can say concerning this teaching, it is so general, so uniform. In the Old Testament there are no words of blessing for poverty. A typical utterance is that which you will find in the Proverbs,—I do not remember chapter and verse,—where it is said, “The wealth of the rich is his strong city ; but the destruction of the poor is their poverty.” Everywhere throughout the Old Testament wealth is praised.

I may instance, possibly, one exception, in the famous prayer of Agur as it is set down in the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs. You will find that he prays : “Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me.” That is, he wishes to escape the burden of poverty and the care of excessive riches. But he asks that all his natural wants of every kind may be adequately supplied ; and this is all that wealth can do for any man. So this, you see, is not to be taken as any derogation of wealth. Everywhere, then, throughout the Old Testament, wealth is spoken of as a good, and as a token of the favor of Heaven. For, as I have had occasion to note several times before, there was no hope on the part of the ancient Jews of any future life, so that

their good is confined to this. And that good consists, first, in long life, then in children, in friends, in social position, in political power, in wealth, in an abundant supply of all the needs and wants of the body, the mind, and the soul,—for whatever they conceived of as constituting any part of the nature of man. God is represented everywhere as promising those who are pious and obedient, those who recognize his laws, those who worship him, that they shall be rewarded with all these good things. And the severest penalty that is threatened against any crime, in the Old Testament, is death, which to the Jew meant merely the deprivation of all the good things of life.

I must call your attention once again—I have done it already in this course of sermons several times—to the typical example of the Book of Job. At first sight it appears to contradict the general statement I have made. For, as I have reminded you, when Job's children are slain, and his cattle and sheep and all his possessions are taken away from him, his friends gather about him, and tell him that this must be a judgment of God. Job denies that he has done anything worthy of punishment, and declares that, if it is a judgment of God, it is an unjust judgment, something which he has not deserved. And then, you would suppose, if the writer desired to set forth some spiritual, some mental, some moral condition as superior to all the good things of life, that he would have had the outcome of this poem in some way vindicate the character of Job in spite of his losses, and then leave him there. But the prepossession of the Jewish mind in favor of their ordinary way of looking at life was such that the poem does not conclude in this way. Job, indeed, is vindicated. It is plainly set forth that God was not sending a punishment upon him, but only putting him to a test in order that he might prove to his accusers

that he was true of heart. This, indeed, is done; but the outcome of the book is that Job has other children,—though how they could comfort him quite for the loss of the first, I do not see,—and he has also other cattle and sheep and oxen, more than he had ever possessed before of all the good things of life, so that he is represented at the end as on the top of the forward-moving wave of prosperity, restored to his social and political position and power, and surrounded by a host of friends. This, then, is the general drift of the teaching of the Old Testament: wealth is a good thing, and poverty is something to be deplored not only, but generally it is a token of the displeasure of the Almighty.

There was an interregnum of a couple of hundred years or so between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New. The Jews, meantime, had lost their nationality, and come under the dominion, hard and cruel and grasping, of the Romans. And during this period of time there had passed over their minds a remarkable change in the estimate which they placed upon wealth and poverty, in their estimate of the characters of the rich and the poor. I wish now to call your attention, not first to the specific teaching of Jesus, but to one or two specimens of the teaching of the New Testament outside the words of the Nazarene. In the first place, let us turn to the Book of James.

James, you know, is declared to be the brother of Jesus, and is the author of this famous Epistle. In the first chapter he says, "Let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate,"—that is, in an improvement of his condition,— "but the rich in that he is made low, because, as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away." In the second chapter you will remember how he talks about the tendency on the part of some of the churches to show a preference for the rich, to

give them the best seats in their gatherings ; when a man appeared on the threshold, to note what kind of clothing he wore ; to have respect to persons. He condemns all this, and then says, "Hearken, my beloved brethren : did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him ? But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats ? Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called ?" And then in the fifth chapter, more remarkable and outspoken statements still : "Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted ; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out ; and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure ; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous ; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord." Here, you see, James has hardly a good word for a rich man. He makes no discrimination : he does not intimate that there were good rich people in his time. But against the rich in general he hurls his anathemas. And the poor, simply as poor, are to be looked upon with favor, to be treated carefully, to be patient and wait for the coming vindication of God.

One more passage only from the New Testament will I ask you to note, and this from the first letter of Paul to the

church in Corinth. It bears some remarkable implications which I shall wish you to take special notice of. "But this, I say, brethren, the time is short. Henceforth let those that have wives be as though they had none, and those that weep as though they wept not, and those that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and those that buy as though they possessed not, and those that use the world as not abusing it. For the fashion of this world passeth away." In other words, Paul, throughout the main body of his teaching, treats wealth as a thing not to be desired or cared for. He tells the poor not to be troubled about their condition. In whatever state people are, he tells them not to attempt overmuch to change it. Why? You need to remember, in regard to all these teachings, what most of the readers of the New Testament in this modern world entirely forget or completely overlook,—that all these writers and all the people to whom they wrote expected an immediate end to the general order of the world. Paul does not say, as a person reading him carelessly might think, "Life is short, and it does not pay to worry overmuch about these things." "The time is short"; that is, the time intervening between the present and the second coming of the Lord. It may be to-morrow or next week: it is hardly worth your while, then, to become absorbed in these things. This influences Paul's teaching on marriage, I may suggest as I pass. He says that a person that is married is interested to please his wife, but the person who is not can give himself entirely to the work of the coming kingdom. You see his doctrine about marriage is seen in the light of this immediate winding up of the present order of earth's affairs. And so his doctrine concerning wealth and poverty is precisely the same. If you are poor, do not mind much about it: if you are rich, do not set your hearts on it or become absorbed in it. The

time is short! In a little while another order of things is to succeed.

This, then, is the teaching of the New Testament outside Jesus. Now let me call your attention, as briefly as I may, to all that Jesus has said on the subject. I say "all." Not that I am going to read to you every passage in the four Gospels. I shall read very few of them. I say "all," in spite of the fact that I shall skip many things, because these many things are only repetitions by the different writers of substantially the same idea. In Matthew, you will remember, in the sixth chapter, he tells all those that come within the sound of his voice not to care about laying up treasures in this world, here on earth, but to turn their attention to the heavenly treasures of the heart, the mind, the soul,—those that neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and that cannot be laid hold on by thieves. "Because," he says, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be"; and, if you are absorbed in the things of this world, this present age, you cannot get ready for the coming kingdom. That, you see, is the basis of his teaching. He tells people that they are not to worry about what they eat or drink, for the heavenly Father clothes the flowers, he feeds the birds of the air, and all these are infinitely less important than a man. So we must trust him to supply whatever is needed, while we devote ourselves first of all to the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And, when he sends forth his disciples on their missionary tour, he tells them not to provide any money, not to take any care for those things, but to trust to the entertainment of the people that they shall meet by the way. His doctrine of charity, which I shall have occasion to refer to pretty soon, is all concentrated in that phrase, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him who would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

I wish now to refer to that which I read as a part of my lesson, the story of the rich young man who came to him, and asked him what he should do in order to inherit eternal life. When the young man claims that he has kept all the commandments, Jesus does not contradict him; he brings no charge against him; he admits, apparently, the truth of his claim. But he says: "You lack one thing. Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and come and follow me." Now, this teaching is perfectly intelligible, natural, reasonable, if Jesus expected the immediate coming of the kingdom of God, because the young man, absorbed in the cares of his wealth, would find that he had all he could do to look after that, and there would be no time, no strength, no enthusiasm, to go into this other great, and greater, service. If that, then, were the belief of Jesus, his teaching is perfectly rational, and to be commended. I do not see how those who deny that Jesus expected the immediate coming of the kingdom can possibly reconcile this teaching with reason or with the proper care of life.

Now, I wish to call your attention to one or two passages in Luke. I do not know whether Jesus really uttered the saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," or whether he first said, "Blessed are ye poor," and that the addition was made afterward by the writers of the Gospels. I do not think there is any way of settling that question. But one thing is clear: that the saying, as we have it in Luke, "Blessed are ye poor," is much more in accord with the ordinary drift of the thought of the time and of the general teaching of the New Testament. "Woe unto ye that are rich," he says, "for ye have received your consolation." You are getting your good things as you go; and, when you are through with the present order of affairs, there will be an end of happiness and peace. I should hesitate in attributing this teach-

ing to Jesus, were it not for the parable which I shall deal with in a moment. He says, and says well, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." And there is hardly a finer saying attributed to him in any of the Gospels than that where he declares that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." This teaching is every way fine and sweet and high. And it is well, perhaps, that he should teach this rich man that he was not following the highest ideal, merely gathering together the good things of this world for his own personal enjoyment, and should enforce it by saying: "This night, any time, your life may be required of you. Then whose shall these things be that thou hast provided? Will you not, then, see that you have thrown away the finest things for the sake of gaining those of less value?"

We come now—and this is the last—to the parable of Dives and Lazarus. There is only one charge made against Dives,—one charge, except of his being rich; and this charge is one made, not directly, but by implication. It does not say in so many words that Dives was cruel, but it is said that Lazarus would fain have filled himself with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, as though the rich man neglected the poor beggar at the gate. Beyond the mere fact that he was rich, this is the only charge that is brought against him; and in the end of the parable even that is omitted. For, when we reach the other side, when both men have died, and Lazarus has gone to Abraham's bosom,—which was the Jewish figure of speech by which the highest seats were represented,—this is not mentioned. It is worth my suggesting to you, lest you may not see the entire force of it: the future kingdom is frequently spoken of as a feast. And in those days men did not sit down at table, but reclined on couches; and it was common for a

man to have the most intimate friend he had in the world next to him, so that actually, as he turned to him, he would lean his head on his bosom. It became a figure of speech, then, with the Jews, to represent the highest felicity in the other world as being so intimate with Abraham, the typical Father of the faithful, that they should sit next to him at the feast, and recline against his bosom. Lazarus, then, the poor man, is represented in the other world as having attained this felicity; and Dives, the rich man, is tormented in the flame of Gehenna. And, seeing Abraham afar off, he begs that Lazarus may be sent to him, that he may touch the tip of his tongue with only a drop of water, to cool for a moment the excess of his torment. Abraham's answer is not, "You have been a bad man in the other life": it is simply: "You were rich down there upon earth, and you had everything you wanted. Lazarus was poor, and went without almost everything. Now things are balanced: he is comforted, and you are tormented." That is the only thing that is said just here about the character of either of them. We might admit the justice of striking a balance somewhere, somewhere. But it does seem as though the balance is certainly not struck here. At the most, we may suppose that Lazarus may have suffered for forty, fifty, sixty, perhaps seventy years; but he did not suffer enough to starve. Somebody must have given him at least a little to eat; and the dogs came and offered him their sympathy and care. What is that by way of balance, to be pitted against an eternity of flame, burning so fiercely that the victim should long for just one drop of water,—one moment's surcease of his agony?

Here, then, is the teaching, in the main, of the Old Testament, of the New Testament, and of Jesus concerning the subjects of wealth and poverty. Let us now come to the

modern world, and face for a little the problems with which we have to deal, and see how much light and guidance we can get from the Bible, Old Testament or New. Let us see how much of this teaching that we are considering abides.

And, in the first place, let us touch the matter of charity, in the technical sense of the word,—the dealing with the problems of poverty. Do we to-day follow the teachings of the Old Testament or the New? Do we anywhere take as ordinary guides any single word of Jesus?

We need to remember right here that we might take these words as sufficient guides if we held the conception of human life, of the world, and of the world's destiny which prevailed at that time, and which Jesus, so far as we can discover, shared with his disciples. If the end of this present order were to be expected in twenty years, fifteen years, possibly ten, perhaps five, possibly even to-morrow,—for this, remember, was the atmosphere of that age,—if we believed that, of course there would be no necessity of doing anything except to relieve immediate present, pressing wants. The rich man would be a fool to hold on to his wealth, to accumulate and pile up possessions, forgetting the culture of the moral and spiritual in him, which alone could fit him for the imminent coming of the kingdom. What better could he do than to sell everything he had, and distribute it lavishly to those that were hungered or cold or naked? It would be only the divinest common sense, in those conditions. But why should we attempt to persuade ourselves that we are being guided, in this modern world, by New Testament methods in dealing with the problem of poverty, when the whole condition of the world, and the conditions of our thought, are completely changed? There is not a word in the New Testament, not a word in the Old, not a word in the teaching of Jesus, that hints even at the abolition of

poverty, except by the coming of this miraculous kingdom which should set everything to rights. There is no trace of an idea on the part of any of the teachers of that time that there was such a thing as the possible abolition of poverty. But we to-day are facing not a great world-wide revolution caused by a sudden descent of the divine : we are facing the problems of a growing, complex civilization, which reaches out into the future as far as eye can see, and which may continue here on this earth for thousands of years. Do we then, to-day, "give" to him that asks, and do we ever turn away from the man who would borrow of us? Does anybody sell all that he has and give it to the poor? Why, friends, we may as well frankly face the fact that the Church itself—every single one of the churches that still claim to believe that the teachings of the New Testament are the final and sufficient revelation of God's method for dealing with all human conditions—has turned squarely away from the traditional methods of dealing with these great affairs. Now and then you find a person—like an ecclesiastic in high position whose words I heard of two or three years ago—declare against the attempt to abolish poverty, saying that it was of divine ordination, and that Jesus himself had declared, "The poor ye have always with you"; and he frankly took the ground that poverty might, in many cases, be the means of cultivating humility and the Christian graces, and that it also was the means of cultivating the Christian virtues of charity and helpfulness on the part of the rich, and that therefore we ought not to attempt to do it away. Now and then, I say, a man will take a position like that. But most of the churches,—what are they doing? Are they following literally the teaching of Jesus? No, they are organized, almost every one of them, into something like the Associated Charities of the city of Boston, and are attempt-

ing to deal with these things,—in the New Testament spirit of love and helpfulness, if you will, but not at all in accordance with the New Testament letter.

We teach, not that it is a virtue to give to any man that asks of you, on the street or at the door, but that it is a vice to give under those conditions. Nine times out of ten, the person who does it is only nurturing this disease of poverty which the skilful physicians of the modern world are trying to cure. It has been found out, as the result of human experience,—and the marvel is that it has taken nearly two thousand years to find it out,—that the New Testament methods of dealing with poverty have only increased instead of diminishing it. We teach to-day what? That the hopelessly invalid, the insane, the naturally incompetent, are to be tenderly, carefully, guarded and helped. But we teach that the lazy, the drunken, those who will not work, had better suffer the pangs of poverty, had better suffer from hunger and cold, until these things peradventure may stir up and stimulate in them at least the beginnings of manhood. We teach that you help men, not by merely giving them a crust when they are hungry or an old garment when they are cold, but that you help when you help them to be men, when you help them on to their feet, when you train their hands so that they can earn their support, when you remove the obstructions and give them hope; and that the men who are able to earn their living, and simply will not, must be driven by the pangs of suffering, if need be, to assert what little manliness there may be left in them. This is the teaching of the modern world. We are trying to abolish poverty, not to nurse it as a school of the Christian virtues, either on the part of the rich or the poor. In other words, the attitude of the modern world—the modern Christian world, as it believes itself—is squarely against the attitude

of the New Testament at every single point. This is to be explained, as I have said, by a change in the conception of civilization, a change of the thought of the world's destiny.

So much concerning this one phase of poverty, the problem of charity. I wish now to speak a little of the rich, and of the desirability and uses of wealth.

The spirit of the New Testament warning against the rich needs still to be uttered and echoed in the ears of men. I do not think that the poor—that is, those who struggle to get along—are the only ones to be pitied. I think some of the most pitiful cases that I have ever seen in my life have been the men loaded down with selfishly gotten wealth, whose brains, whose hearts, whose souls, were drowned in the honey of their possessions, so that they had forgotten to be men.

I do not believe, friends,—you may not agree with me : I shall not quarrel with you if you do not,—I do not believe that the many millionnaires of the modern world, as a general thing, are the owners of their wealth. As illustrating what I mean, I was taking a drive with a friend who was one of the most successful and prosperous men of the city, in one of the suburbs, two or three years ago. He said, "Such a man lives here, estimated to be worth so much ; and such a man lives there," and he went on pointing out the houses to me. This man was a lawyer, another a merchant, and another something else. At last it occurred to me to ask him a question. I said, "Will you tell me, according to your best judgment, how many of these men have really earned the money which they possess, in such a sense that it can be rightly called their own?" His answer was, "Very few of them, indeed." If you trace the methods by which most of the many millionnaires of the world, as I have said, have come into possession of their millions, you will find them

touched, tainted, with dishonesty, with injustice, with selfishness, with cruelty, somewhere. For I do not believe it is possible, in the main, for a man to own fifty millions which really belongs to him. Of course there may be exceptions; but I believe that this is generally true. And there is a danger in this great possession of wealth, if a man owns too much. In the first place, it is likely to take most of his time and most of his interest to look after it; and, if a man is looking after that all the time, then he certainly has no time, no energy, no strength, to devote to other things which are more important to his manhood than the possession of a hundred times more money than he can use.

But there is one thing to be said: so far as these great millionnaires are related to the common world, they do serve the world, no matter whether they try to serve it or not, no matter whether they hate it or not. They cannot, as people did in the time of Jesus, bury their wealth. They cannot hide it away in a stocking, as now and then a miser does. If a man has fifty millions, he is anxious to secure the highest possible percentage of income from it; and, in order to do that, he must use it. And it is almost impossible for him to use it, no matter how he came into possession of it, without the general public getting some benefit from it. This is to be said, then, so far as the general welfare is concerned.

But note some of the dangers of this excess of wealth. In the first place, a man is very likely to be contented merely with that. And if a man is a soul, a child of God, with an endless destiny reaching out before him, and if it is necessary for him, in order to start over there with advantage, to cultivate the soul in him, then the worst thing that can happen to him is to be perfectly contented without any such cultivation. And, then, a man is apt to lead a selfish life, to place a great gulf between himself and the poor, to get out of relations

with them, so that he does not know "how the other half lives." I say this is a tendency on the part of the very rich, — to get out of sympathy with them, as that French princess just before the Revolution, who, in her naïve simplicity, suggested that, if the people were starving and could not get bread, she did not see why they did not eat cake. People forget what it means to be poor when poverty never touches them; and then they are apt to be selfish, sensual, cruel, hard-hearted. These, I say, are constant temptations and dangers. And, if a man has once got his hands on anything, he is very apt to think, "Now, this is mine, and I have a right to do with it as I please"; while, as a matter of fact, in that ultimate sense it is not his, and he has no such right. No man has a right to do with anything which he possesses other than that which he is convinced will be for the best good of himself and of all mankind. That is the only right a child of God has, dealing with that which is God's.

But I must hasten to one more point, and that is the question as to whether wealth is desirable. I believe it is. I have no belief whatever in the sanctifying power of poverty. As it ordinarily goes, extreme poverty crushes the life, the heart, the hope, out of men: it animalizes, it brutalizes. An employer was telling me, the other day, that he knew that some of his workmen laid up a little every day and every week, keeping it until they got a certain sum, and then went off and deliberately used it in dissipation. I do not wonder. A man living in that condition sees no desirable future before him on this earth to make it seem to him worth while to add one penny to another. He knows he can never lift himself as a man up on to the level of the society which seems to him good and desirable. Mind you, I do not justify him in his course. I simply say, taking human nature as it is, I do not wonder at it. Wealth is desirable; and every man

who adds to the wealth of the world is a public benefactor. I do not mean by that every man who gets rich, because a large part of those who get rich do not add a single cent to the wealth of the world: they simply get hold of wealth that was already in existence. Every man who adds to the wealth of the world in any way is a public benefactor, because there is no possibility of any high human civilization without wealth. Man must be lifted above the level of the animal, above mere eating, mere drinking, merely protection against the cold, merely getting something to wear. He must be lifted above this before he becomes in the highest sense a man. There must be time for a man to find out he has a brain, if you will. He must have not only time to read books, but money to buy the books, so that he may come into contact with the best thought of the world. A man must have time to cultivate the sense of beauty in him, and money to purchase at least a few of the things that stand for beauty. A man must have time to evolve this faculty that takes delight in musical sounds, and so become possessed of opportunities to indulge and enjoy this spiritual delight. There must be wealth before there can be civilization. I do not believe at all that common idea that it was the wealth and luxury of ancient Rome that destroyed her purity, and therefore her civilization. I think, if you will read carefully, you will find that precisely the opposite was true. It was the poverty of ancient Rome that destroyed her.

There must be accumulated wealth: only there must be discovered some way by which wealth can be more equally distributed. I believe we shall solve this problem. The world of this nineteenth century is aroused concerning it. There are thinkers, there are dreamers,— you may call them wild, if you will,— but they are attacking the real problem as to how God's universal bounty, in bestowing such limitless

possibilities upon the race in the resources of this old planet of ours, as to how this can be distributed until not one here and another there can climb up out of the animal and be a man, but as to how all that wear the human form can climb up out of the animal and be men. This is the problem,—a problem, you will see, the direct opposite of that which faced the New Testament time ; a problem engaging the heart, the enthusiasm, the devotion, of the world,—such devotion, such love of man, as never existed before. And this is a problem that shall yet find its solution.

NOTE.—Some one may object that I do not take sufficient account of such a saying as that in 2 Thess. iii. 10: "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." But, if any one will carefully study this second letter to the church in Thessalonica, he will see that the writer was dealing specially with the second coming, and was only trying to repress temporary disorders in the mean time.

JESUS' DOCTRINE OF NON-RESISTANCE.

IN our course of studies as to the main points of the teaching of Jesus, we have come to this famous doctrine of non-resistance. It has played a great part in the thoughts, the speculations, the theories of the world; but it has played a very small part in its actual practice. We all dream, and from the beginning men have dreamed, of an era of peace, of a time when the war-drum shall throb no longer, when the battle-flags shall be furled, when strife and bloodshed shall be only a horrible memory of the past. And all of us, I take it, believe in the possibility of some time realizing this dream; and our hearts respond to any one who pictures to us this time of peace, and calls upon us to do whatsoever we may in bringing it to pass. We are all agreed here. But that is not the point for our treatment this morning. What we are to consider is the actual teaching of Jesus, as to whether it has been practised, as to whether it ought to be practised, as to what is to be our personal, our social, organized, political attitude on this great subject, while the world is in course of advance and before the ideal condition of things is here.

I think myself that it is a positive evil for us to confuse our minds by imagining that we are loyal to certain ideas, to certain teachings, which we practically ignore. We ought to be frank and clear-minded, and face the facts. There are thousands of people who claim that the Sermon on the

Mount is the central idea of their religion. They say: "We want no creeds, we want no doctrines. We go back to the Sermon on the Mount: that is religion enough for us": forgetting, apparently, that the Sermon on the Mount everywhere implies creeds and doctrines, and forgetting another point,—that there is hardly a single positive precept in the Sermon on the Mount which they even attempt to obey. We ought to clear the air, it seems to me, in regard to these matters, find out what the real Jesus is and what he teaches, what our relations to him are, what they ought to be, and frankly take our position, while we attempt to do what we can for the advance of the world.

What is the attitude of the Old Testament on this matter of non-resistance? We need not go back of that; for human history, so far as we can trace it into the shadows of the pre-historic times, is one world-wide scene of conflict. But what is the attitude of the Old Testament? It is commonly assumed that the same God who manifested himself in Old Testament times, who inspired the writers of the Old Testament books, is the God who manifested himself in New Testament times and inspired the writers of New Testament books. Let us, then, as a background for the attitude of Jesus, glance for a moment at the Old Testament. God is represented there not as a God of peace: he is the God of battles, the Lord of hosts; Yaweh of Sabaoth,—that is, Jehovah that marshals and leads armies. And, from the time when the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt until the time when Jesus himself appeared, the Hebrew people, led, as they trusted, by Jehovah, resisted evil—evil men, evil nations, their enemies—at every point where there was any hope of success, and thousands of times when there appeared no ground for any rational hope. God is represented as stopping even the sun in the heavens to enable one of his

chosen warriors successfully to fight and conquer his foes. David, the man of war, became the ideal prince of the Hebrew people, the man who came to be regarded as a figure of the Messianic king to come; and from his youth up he was a man of war. Some at least of the prophets, as they looked forward to the coming of their king, who was to rule over all the nations of the world, represented him as "breaking his enemies," "smiting them with the rod of his mouth," "breaking them in pieces like a potter's vessel," dashing his foes to right and left as he went on to victory. There is no trace, then, of any doctrine of non-resistance that manifests itself in any important way in the Old Testament.

Passing by Jesus for a moment, what is the attitude of the New Testament on the subject? It does not have much to say. It does teach, however, explicitly that men are subject to the governments that are set over them; and they are taught that "the powers that be are ordained of God." Here, then, in the New Testament is distinct and explicit teaching that organized government, organized force, is a part of God's plan of governing the world. And the ideal Christian,—of course it is a figure of speech, of course it is poetry, but it is striking and suggestive that Paul should take that kind of figure to represent it,—the ideal Christian is set forth as a man armed *cap-à-pie*, panoplied like a warrior, fighting for truth, fighting against evil in whatever form it manifests itself; and he is the ideal who fights tirelessly until he has overcome. There is very little trace, then, of the doctrine of non-resistance, outside the Gospels, in the New Testament. Paul does indeed say in one place, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"; and this doctrine we grandly allow. Let us now turn to Jesus' teaching.

In the opening part of the fifth chapter of Matthew the

doctrine everywhere is that the blessed are the meek, the peaceable, the quiet-living, the poor, those who are the victims, so to speak, of the then condition of the world. One other place let us note in passing, lest I overlook it. Near the close of the life of Jesus you remember the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, where one of the disciples draws a sword, and proposes to resist the Master's arrest. Jesus says: "Put up thy sword into its sheath. They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." You see, then, here there is this same consistency of teaching, from the Beatitudes to the arrest in the garden of Gethsemane. The special points, however, that I wish to read to you are these few verses:—

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." That is the old version: the new version has it, "Resist not him that is evil."

"But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." That is, do not resist evil in any form, nor him who is evil. There is the bald, frank statement, which we must face and deal with in some sort of fashion.

Who is there, in the history of the world, that has attempted to obey these commands? There has appeared in the modern world the sect of Quakers, or Friends, whose chief doctrine is peace, is non-resistance. They have attempted to carry out this teaching of Jesus into literal fulfillment. But it is a question as to whether they could have existed one week in their attitude of non-resistance, had they not been surrounded and closed, protected on every hand by the organized forces of the civilized world. And the

Quakers themselves sometimes forget their chief doctrine. I wish to give you one illustration of it by quoting a verse or two from our beloved Whittier. When at last, as the result of the most gigantic armed resistance of evil that the modern world has known, slavery was abolished at the stroke of the pen of Lincoln, at the stroke of the sword,—for the pen would have been powerless, had not the sword made way for it,—when this was achieved, Whittier, the Quaker, breaks out into a poem entitled “*Laus Deo*,” Praise to God:—

“It is done!

Clang of bell and roar of gun
Send the tidings up and down.
How the belfries rock and reel!
How the great guns, peal on peal,
Fling the joy from town to town!

.

“For the Lord

On the whirlwind is abroad;
In the earthquake he has spoken;
He has smitten with his thunder
The iron walls asunder,
And the gates of brass are broken!

“Loud and long

Lift the old exulting song;
Sing with Miriam by the sea,
He has cast the mighty down;
Horse and rider sink and drown;
He hath triumphed gloriously!

.

“Ring and swing,

Bells of joy! on Morning’s wing
Send the song of praise abroad!
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns
Who alone is Lord and God!”

That does not seem like a Quaker's chant of peace. It is a song over successful, mighty, armed resistance of evil, a song of praise to God, recognition of his arm in it, and gratitude for his manifestation of himself. This, then, is what Quakerism comes to when you put it to the highest and final test.

Who else is there in the modern world that claims to teach us that we must not resist evil? There is one great name,—a name foremost in the literature of the modern world, a name foremost also in theological and ethical discussion,—Count Leo Tolstoï, the famous Russian. He has written more than one book to prove that this doctrine of non-resistance to evil is the very centre and essence and soul of "the gospel of Christ." He takes the ground that now, literally, everywhere, it should be obeyed. I would agree with him if now, literally, everywhere, and by all, it could be obeyed. But Tolstoï proposes, in his own person, at once, to begin, whatever any one else may do. And do you note, it means, as he interprets it, the abolition of all government, of all force of every kind,—armies, taxes, police, prisons, everything that is a manifestation of force in dealing with any kind of evil. He faces the logic of it squarely. There was an interview with him published two or three years ago,—I do not have it at hand, and do not recall the name of the man,—in which the point-blank question was put to him as to what he would do if some ruffian should seize¹ from his very side his own daughter, to carry her off to outrage and infamy. And, though the tears ran down the old count's face at the very thought of being put to such a test, he said, what I honor him too much to believe, that he would not have resisted even that by force. I speak of this to illustrate what the literal carrying out of this doctrine of non-resistance means. It means the abolition of all forces, and the establishment of what we mean by anarchy. Do not be fright-

ened by that word. There are a great many people in the modern world who are philosophical anarchists ; and they are wise, thoughtful, good people. They believe that government does more harm than good, and that therefore it should be abolished. As a speculation, they are perfectly free to discuss it. And I look forward, friends, to a time, doubtless many thousands of years before us, when this shall be realized, because the world will have outgrown the need of prisons and police and armies and government of any kind. If all people wished to do right, why, of course there would be no necessity for forcing them to do right, or, at any rate, of protecting others from their attempts to do wrong.

This, then, is what the doctrine would mean if we carried it out literally. I wish now to turn to the attitude of the Church. The Church claims, and has always claimed of course, that these words are the words of God, to be absolutely, unquestioningly obeyed. But let us note the attitude of the Church, as illustrated by history, concerning this matter. Has the Church, in its organized capacity, ever done more than pretend that these words ought to be obeyed? The Church at first was weak ; it occupied a position of dependence ; it had to submit to persecution of every kind. And let us say, to the credit of thousands of men and women, that they did submit, bravely, unflinchingly, sweetly, trustingly, even to the death, believing that through death they were to enter into life. But has the Church, in its organized capacity, ever submitted when it could help it? As soon as it was able, the Church climbed to the throne of Rome ; and, from the minute that it could control the secular arm, the secular arm with the sharpest kind of a sword in it has been used by the Church in its own defence, in resisting every kind of enemy, whether outside its limits or inside. There is no religion on the face of the earth that has shed so much blood for

religion's sake as has Christianity. At not one single point in its history has it attempted, as an organized power, to obey these words of the Nazarene. You ask if the Church believes in non-resistance, in meekness, in kindness in the presence of an enemy, or what it takes to be an enemy ; and the answer is the Inquisition and Saint Bartholomew. And over this last, the bloodiest and most treacherous resistance of what it claimed to be evil that has blackened its history, by the order of the pope Te Deums rung out all over Christendom. The Church, then, has never attempted to obey this which Tolstoi thinks is the central doctrine of Christianity. I do not say now that it ought to have been obeyed : I am merely marking the fact.

Let us turn, then, and trace a few of the steps by which the human race has climbed to its present position, merely that we may find out whether this method of non-resistance is the method of the advance of civilization. That is the point I wish you to have in mind : is this method the method that God has ordained by which the world has climbed to the attainment of all that it has reached? Let us go back in imagination to the time when the first crude, uncivilized, barbaric, half-animal man was upon the earth. There came a time when, through love of wife and child, he wished to hold and keep these for his own. Suppose then, in the midst of that rough, cruel, brutal condition of affairs, he had begun to practise the doctrine of non-resistance : how long could wife or child have remained his own? The family itself began because man would fight to the very death for those that he loved, and circle these around with every conceivable means of defence and offence, staking off a little place that he called home, and fighting for it to the very last gasp of his life. Not non-resistance, but resistance to the bitterest end,—out of this was born the family. Take

the first beginning of agriculture in the world, the first time that a forest was felled and a little field cleared and a little grain planted : could the men who owned this, and who were trying to take this next step up in the civilization of the world, practise the doctrine of non-resistance? As well might you preach to Holland to practise non-resistance against the waters of the sea. What did Holland do? It built its dikes to keep off the rough buffeting of the waves, and so reclaimed and cultivated its soil. And so the men who began the world's first agriculture must build their dikes, and fight off that turbulent sea of human opposition and aggression that beat against them. It was out of the doctrine of resistance, not of non-resistance, that agriculture sprang.

Glance at one or two other illustrations, as we come up the pathway of human history. The world, from that day until now, in oratory, in song, has celebrated the achievements of the famous three hundred Greeks at Thermopylæ. What did they do? Did they lie down quietly, and let the Persian hordes march over them to the conquest of their Fatherland? They resisted to the very last man, and died into immortal glory through the victory which they achieved by their resistance. So, in later times, the Turk threatened to overrun the civilization of Europe. The Turk has been pestilence, fire, and devastation wherever he has set his foot : no civilization has been touched by him without being blighted. Ought the men, then, on the eastern border of Europe to have sat down quietly, and let them pour over the world's achievements in the way of civilization? They fought them back at every turn ; and the world has been grateful to them ever since that they resisted this evil, at the cost of all that was dear to them. How was it when the barons resisted King John, and wrested from his tyrannical grasp the Magna

Charta which was the birth of England's liberties? How was it during the Thirty Years' War in the Netherlands, when they resisted the aggressions of Philip and of the Catholic Church and its armies, and wrought for human freedom for all time? How is it that Cromwell has become a hero for resisting the tyranny of Charles I., his Roundheads riding into glory and song and the gratitude of every age since that day? How was it in our own War of Independence? Did we submit, did we preach non-resistance to the aggressions of the mother country? Why do we honor George Washington and his fellows to-day but because they did not obey these words from the Sermon on the Mount? And in our great conflict against the aggressions of the slave-power did Whittier sing his magnificent songs celebrating the men who went to Kansas to resist the power of slavery that would possess itself of this new free Territory,—did he, when he thus fired the hearts of the people, illustrate his consistency as a Quaker? And, when in the last great trial of battle, what was it that won us the victory? It was resistance to evil at the cost of blood and treasure untold.

I was at a dinner the other night, celebrating the birthday of Lincoln. Mr. Chittenden was the guest of the evening, and talked for an hour, giving reminiscences of his personal life and character; and one point I wish to speak of as illustrating the theme I have in hand this morning. He said that the day of Lincoln's arrival at Washington, while he was staying at Willard's Hotel, a delegation from the Peace Congress, which was then in session, called upon him; and one Northern man, craven, weak-kneed, fearing for the prosperity of business at the North more than for the sacrifice of principle,—a great, leading, wealthy merchant there,—pleaded, childish almost, with Mr. Lincoln to do everything,

to concede everything, for the sake of peace. And he closed his picture of what would happen by saying that, if he did not, the grass would grow in the streets of New York. Mr. Lincoln calmly replied: "Mr. — [I will not mention his name, though Mr. Chittenden did], when I enter upon this high office," — for you remember he had not been inaugurated then, — "when I enter upon this high office, I shall take an oath. In that oath I shall swear to support the Constitution of the United States, and to see that the laws are enforced in every State in the Union. And, when I have taken upon myself that solemn oath, that oath I shall enforce by every means at my command, let the grass grow where it will." And the heart and the hope of the nation thrilled in response to that magnificent stand. And Mr. Chittenden went on to say that the atmosphere of Washington was cleared from that moment. Hope, heart, courage, came into the souls of those who had been depressed, and who had not yet learned of what stuff our greatest man was made.

Every step, then, friends, from the beginning of civilization until to-day, has been wrought out by not obeying these particular words in the Sermon on the Mount. Let me ask you to glance for just one moment at what appears to be the method of the universe. If we can find out that, of course we can find out God so far; for the universe is the expression of the thought and method and life of God. Everywhere we can trace and apprehend the universe, we find that it is one organized, infinite, almighty resistance of evil. The universe, of course, is in favor of the enforcing of its own laws; and you let any one attempt, in any direction, to disregard one of nature's laws, and he meets not only resistance, he meets almighty resistance at every turn. The universe, then, is one organized resistance of evil; and under this power of resistance evil shall some day find itself ground to powder.

What, then, must we think of these words of Jesus? How can we explain them? In what sense are they true? Superficially, most certainly, they are not true. Jesus says: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Has there ever been a time, in the history of the earth, when the meek have stood any chance of inheriting it? It is just the meek who have inherited the smallest part of it, from the beginning until now. It is Jay Gould, it is Vanderbilt, it is Rockefeller, it is people like this, who inherit the earth; and, whatever other virtues they may possess, they are not at all distinguished, so far as I have been able to find out, for meekness. I attended a funeral the other day of a noble man; and I overheard one of his life-long friends and business associates say of him, that the one defect in his character was just this meekness. He died poor. This other man was rich; and he said the trouble with this man was that he was "too good for this world, for the practical affairs of life; he trusted everybody, and let everybody run over him; he was too modest to assert himself." And he went on to say, and his life proved the success of his principle, "I have learned never to go without anything for the lack of asking for it." That is the principle of success in this world. If you wish to inherit the earth, you had better practice that principle rather than meekness. This is not true, then, in this sense; but there is, friends, a deeper truth right in there, which I can only suggest. So far as this man is concerned, he inherited something finer and higher than the money of his companion. And I would prefer, if I could have my choice, to take his character and his career rather than that of the friend who was criticising him.

But here is the point that I wish to call your attention to. I can find no key to the explanation of these words on the part of Jesus except that which has unlocked some of the

other difficulties of his teaching before ; and that is his belief in the imminence of the second stage in the history of the world. Jesus believed that God himself was to appear very soon, to vindicate himself, to bare his arm for his people, and reveal a perfect condition of affairs. And meantime he advises those that trust in him to wait, to be meek, to be patient, not to be self-assertive, not to resist evil. "Do not fight ; that is, do not cultivate the spirit of the world, which results in these perpetual conflicts. If a man sues you at the law, instead of contending with him, let him have the coat that he is ready to take away, and the cloak, too, rather than fight about it. If anybody by force compels you to go with him a mile, go two rather than fight about it. Give to anybody that asks of you. Do not trouble about these affairs for God has them in his keeping ; and soon he will appear to vindicate those that have trusted in him, and establish the reign of universal and eternal righteousness." In the light of this explanation, these words are wise and sane and true. But the attitude of the Church towards them, in treating them as if they were teachings good for the kind of world which has existed from that day to this, is not wise, it is not ingenuous. They are not good for the kind of world in which we are living to-day. What is the principle, then, that underlies them, the principle that we may adopt, the principle that should actuate us in the course of our practical living ?

We may fight in self-defence, we may resist any evil that threatens our welfare or our peace ; we may fight in defence of so much good as the world has yet gained. We will not lie down and let those who threaten its destruction walk over our bodies to carry out their own evil will. We will resist to the last, for the sake of so much civilization as the world has yet attained. We will fight for the weak, for those that are defenceless and that need help. And we will fight

for the sake of the next step upward and onward in the civilization of the world ; for these steps come, friends, only through struggle, only through effort, only through warfare and victory. But we will fight how? Not in bitterness towards men, not with enmity towards men in our hearts, not with selfishness and the desire for personal gain. We will fight evil for the sake of men. We will fight men, if need be, for their own sake. That is what we did in the case of the last war ; and most of the men at the South to-day are grateful to us because we did fight them for their sakes, for the sake of freedom, humanity, the country, the future. Not selfishly, then, not with hatred in our hearts, but with love and the dream of peace, we will strive and struggle onward until the world is civilized enough,—and it will be some day,—so that these words of Jesus can be literally obeyed.

JESUS AS TO WOMAN, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

It is with a good deal of diffidence that I come to the treatment of this special theme. It is a subject concerning which there are not only wide intellectual differences, but, what is more important still, or more difficult to deal with, there are all grades of passionate prejudice and feeling. And, while it is difficult enough to thread one's way through the intricacies of thought, it is still more difficult to treat, before a public audience, a question concerning which there are such earnest differences of feeling. I know no other way, then, than that which I always try to follow, of being as simple and as frank as I know how in setting forth not only what I think Jesus taught, but what I personally believe to be true.

I wish to precede the consideration of the specific teaching of Jesus by touching on some points concerning the status of woman in the Old Testament, and the doctrine of the New Testament writers, leaving Jesus one side. Of course, the whole position of woman under the Mosaic dispensation, or during the period of Old Testament history, is characterized by a condition which makes it impossible that she should have risen to her height. Polygamy was generally permitted and indorsed. And in a social condition like this, of course, woman is dependent not only, but she is dependent upon the passing whims of men, has no opportu-

nity to assert or live out her own life, restricted on every hand, and kept in a position which, compared with the present, is one that we must regard as degraded. Of course, we are to understand that in a polygamous condition of society, where men and women all indorse it, there is no conscious sense of degradation, because the institution comes up to the level of the ethical ideal which prevails. In spite of this condition, however, it is very remarkable to me to note that the standing of women in the Old Testament is in most ways superior to that which is represented in the New. In spite of the conditions which surrounded them, hampered them, and, as we should say, kept them down, the intrinsic character of some of the women of the Old Testament put them to the front, and led them to stand forth as grand representatives, not only of their sex, but of their time. Women, in the Old Testament, might take part, if they possessed the ability and character for it, both in politics and in war. In one instance, we find a woman, Deborah, occupying the position of judge. We find the generals, the leaders of the armies, coming to her for consultation, and declaring on at least one occasion, when an important expedition was to be undertaken, that, if she would go along, lend her influence to it, it could succeed, but without her not. We find Miriam leading in that song of victory which crowned the deliverance of the children of Israel from their captivity. And in the 31st chapter, the last chapter, of the Book of Proverbs, there is, on the whole, I think, the finest characterization of the ideal woman that the Bible anywhere contains. So that women did occupy, in spite of the disabilities that attached to their position, situations of dignity, did have a large share of freedom, and did live in such a way as to impress upon the thought of their time some of the grandest ideals of womanhood that the world has ever known. So much only

as to the position of women in the Old Testament. I shall have occasion to refer by and by to the Mosaic law concerning the matter of marriage and divorce.

Turn now to the New Testament. Leave the Gospels for a moment one side. What is the teaching there concerning the position, the work, the worth, the dignity, of women? There is very little direct teaching on the subject. Most of it comes by way of implication, and springs out of the ordinary problems that come up for solution in the formation and growth of the early churches. Paul's position about women is not one that we can look upon with a great deal of respect. And, curiously enough, even those churches that claim that every word of Paul's is equally a word of God,—that he wrote by divine inspiration and was infallible in his teaching,—even these churches practically disregard the teaching of Paul in regard to this matter. For example, Paul says that a woman is not to appear in a public assembly of men without her head covered ; she is not to speak in this public assembly ; if she wishes to know anything, she must ask her husband at home ; she is not to express before men her opinions, or assume to have any wisdom for the solution of any practical problem whatsoever. And yet we find a good many of the orthodox churches to-day, who claim to believe that Paul spoke by divine inspiration, who are opening their schools of learning not only, but their pulpits, to women, squarely in the face, as it seems to me, of the direct teaching of Paul. Paul does not speak of marriage in any high terms. He does, indeed, say that it is honorable in all. He does advise those who are already married to remain as they are. But he explicitly and definitely advises both men and women who are free not to become married. He says: The man who is married must concern himself with the welfare of his wife ; it will take up his time

and attention to look after her. The man who is not married can give himself entirely to the service of God, and to preparation for the coming kingdom. So he advises a man to marry, if the alternative is something worse than that, but not to marry if he can help himself. This is the plain and direct teaching of Paul in regard to this matter.

But you are to note why. As I have told you before several times, in the course of these sermons, people have read the New Testament without having their eyes open to the condition of things existing at that time, as to the prevailing ideas in these early centuries. Paul believed that the world was immediately to come to an end: there is the key to his teaching. He believed that the one thing that was of importance for both men and women was to be ready for this coming kingdom not only, but to do everything they possibly could to get other people ready for it, too. And Paul was right; Paul was not insane; Paul was a clear-headed, practical, thinking man. If we believed as he did, you would find me, at any rate, advocating, probably, his ideas. I think you would find them generally acceptable to the level-headed people of the time. If we believed that the present order of things was coming to an end within ten years or possibly five, perhaps one, possibly next week; that there was going to be a new order of social civilization, a new condition of things for the world, and that it meant that those who were ready for it would become citizens in that heavenly kingdom, and that those who were not would be cast out,—would you not agree with Paul that it would be practical, a wise thing, not to concern yourselves much about anything else except getting ready for it, and helping other people to get ready? Would it not be wise to keep free from all sorts of entanglements that would hinder your devotion to this one great divine ideal, the preparation for this one impend-

ing event? You are to find right here the key to Paul's teaching; and so Paul, I presume, did not mean to slur women or put them in a lower position than men. He does, indeed, offer reasons for some of the advice which he gives, which seem to imply woman's inferiority, seem to imply, at any rate, a moral weakness on her part which did not pertain to man. For when he goes on to explain why women are not to appear in public uncovered, and not to speak in public assemblies, what does he say? He says, in the first place, that man was created first and woman afterward; man, therefore, has precedence, and is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the Church. And, then, the second reason he gives is that woman was the one who first succumbed to temptation, who first fell in the Garden of Eden, and that it was through her influence that Adam also partook of the forbidden fruit, and fell also. These are the two reasons that Paul gives. Undoubtedly, however, Paul was influenced, though he does not say much about that, by the public opinion prevailing at the time. In the old civilizations of Greece and Rome we find the honorable wife was accustomed to keep herself in seclusion. It was only the woman of questionable character who appeared in public, who became a philosopher, took part in public debates, and was the learned woman of the age. And Paul undoubtedly felt that in this formative period of the Church, if women went forward too fast in this matter, there might be dangers of public disorder.

This, then, is the teaching of Paul. The other apostles have practically nothing to say upon the subject. There is one other phase, however, of New Testament teaching that I must speak of before leaving it; and that is the attitude of the Apocalypse, of the Book of Revelation. There we begin to see, not quite the beginnings, but the clear manifestation

of the spirit of asceticism which prevailed in later days in the Church, and which has been characteristic of almost all the religions that had their birth in the East. It is most curious to know that most Eastern, Oriental, speculation has tended to regard matter as evil,—essentially, necessarily, evil,—and that the person who would lead a pure and spiritual life must have as little to do with the flesh as possible. The Book of Revelation is not only tinctured with this thought all through, but it also is marked, and marked in an especial degree, with this expectation of the immediate, direct coming of Jesus. So what does the Book of Revelation teach as the crown and culmination of its idea in regard to woman and marriage? It pictures that superb city, the heavenly Jerusalem, the home of the redeemed; and it places nearest to the throne, under the special leadership of the Lamb,—it places there the hundred and forty-and-four thousand of the redeemed. And these hundred and forty-and-four thousand, who occupy, so to speak, the very highest place in the coming city,—these are the ones who lived an ascetic life, they are those who have never been married. It is specially set forth that they are peculiarly pure and exalted because they have not been married. This, then, is the position of the last book in the New Testament, in the order in which at present they are arranged.

Such, then, is the teaching in the main — sufficient for our purpose — of the Old Testament and the New concerning woman and marriage. I shall ask you now to follow me while I go, in some little detail, into the teaching of Jesus. My plan was — which I shall follow as far as possible — to take up all the cases where we find Jesus coming into relations with women, and find out what the special significance of each appears to be, and then take up the definite teaching which he has left for us on the subject of marriage and

divorce, and this other matter of asceticism, which perhaps you have not noticed that he teaches at all.

The first note which we have in the Bible is when, as a boy, in that visit to the temple, he asserts at one moment his independence of his mother, declaring that it is fitting for him that he should be about his Father's business without consultation with anybody; and then it closes by representing him as going quietly home with his father and mother, and being lovingly obedient to them. This is the only glimpse we have until he appears and enters upon his public ministry, which ministry, as you are aware, covered perhaps a year and a half, possibly a little less than that.

The Gospel of John, as you know, is of late origin; and whatever it says on this subject is not to be regarded as of equal authority to that of the other three Gospels. And yet I wish to note a few references here; for they will be valuable, at any rate, as setting forth what was believed to be the attitude of Jesus, whether they really represent what he said and did or not. In the first place is the marriage scene at Cana in Galilee. Here, of course, Jesus indorses marriage, he indorses social festivities of all kinds, he indorses the drinking of wine on these festive occasions, and goes so far even as to create wine, and better wine than they had had, after the supply had given out. There is a curious statement here, in regard to the manner in which he addresses his mother, which, I confess, I do not know how to explain. It is said that, when his mother came forward and told him that the wine had given out, he said, with apparent abruptness, in a way that sounds strange on his lips: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come." I say I do not know what to do with a saying like that. I am glad that it is in the Gospel of John, and that I need not feel any special necessity of dealing with it at all. It does

not sound like the tender and loving way in which you would suppose that Jesus would speak to his own mother.

The next point that I shall refer to is the one of the woman who came in while he was reclining at a feast with Simon the Pharisee, and broke the precious box of ointment, poured it upon his feet, anointed his feet with the ointment, washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. I think that this is one of the most beautiful scenes anywhere in the Gospels. It means that in some way the simple preaching, the tender love of the Father in heaven which Jesus had been setting forth, had touched this woman who was a sinner ; and she knew not how else to express her gratitude and the overflowing love of her heart. And, though a scene like this would be very strange to us in our modern civilization, it was not at all strange for that time. Jesus, as you know, reclined on a couch at the feast, with his head toward the table and his feet, easily accessible and bare, extending in the opposite direction, so that it was perfectly easy for the woman to come in through the open door,—not closed in that warm country,—and thus express her love, her gratitude, for the hope that had come into her heart as the result of the preaching of the Master. Curiously enough, we do not know who this woman was. She has been the theme of painting, poetry, song, from that day to this. Tradition has clothed the incident in all sorts of fantastic ways ; and we find that the Gospels themselves apparently contradict each other in teaching who the woman was. Luke, in this principal narrative, gives her no name. Simply, she was “a woman who was a sinner.” John says expressly that the woman that broke the box of ointment on the feet of Jesus was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha ; and yet there is not an intimation anywhere else in the Gospels that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was other than a

noble, pure, true woman, so that it does not seem possible that she is the same one. Some have tried to get out of the difficulty by suggesting that this thing may have happened twice in the history of Jesus, and that once it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who did it, and the other time this unknown woman. Tradition has generally assumed that it was Mary Magdalene, the Mary out of whom, it is said, seven devils had been cast; but there is no authority for this beyond the tradition. Here, then, is revealed that spirit of tenderness and compassion which peculiarly characterized Jesus. One of the most noteworthy things about him is that he kept the lightning of his severity for the calculating, the intellectual, the scheming, selfish sins. Everywhere Jesus is represented as one wealth of tender forgiveness for the sins of weakness and passion: all his severity is for the other kind.

Now, I must refer to that other case, one of the most beautiful pictures, I think, in all the Gospels; and yet I must say something about it in a moment which I very much regret the necessity of saying. In the eighth chapter of John is that picture of the woman brought by her accusers to Jesus, who tell him that a woman like her should be stoned according to the law of Moses. They wanted to see what he would say about it, their purpose being, evidently, to trap him in some way. Jesus, however, it is said, was stooping down and writing with his finger in the dust; and he went on writing as though he did not hear them. But by and by, after they had presented their accusation, he rose up and said: All right. Follow Moses' precedent: let her be stoned. Only the one man of you that has never sinned, let him be the one to cast the first stone. Then he stooped down, and went on with his writing again. And one by one, convicted in their own consciences, it is said, they slunk out

of the way, and left him and the woman alone. Then he rose, and said: "Have not these men condemned you? Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more." This, I say, is one of the most beautiful pictures in all the Gospels; and yet, alas! modern criticism is going to take it away from us. In other words, if you read the revised version of the Gospel, you will find this whole story enclosed in brackets; and they will tell you in the margin that most of the ancient manuscripts of the Gospels do not contain it, and that those which do have many widely varying statements that seem to touch its authenticity. I suppose they will keep on printing it in the Bible; but it will be printed henceforth in brackets, and we shall be obliged to question whether it is true. It is ideally so true and beautiful that we will believe, at any rate, that it ought to have been true.

I need to note only in passing the general relation between Jesus and the family in Bethany. This appears to have been the only family where Jesus might find anything of quiet seclusion and rest during the course of his public ministry. Here, it seems, on every opportunity he loved to withdraw himself, in the presence of Lazarus and his two sisters Martha and Mary, as in a home where he could find peace, and that sense of domestic seclusion which was the only one that ever came to him during his public life. The story of the woman at the well of Samaria does not bring up any matter touching these problems, so that we need not stop at all on that. By implication he condemns her for her course in having so many husbands; but that point will be covered by the more explicit teaching which we shall find in another place.

The last scene in the life of Jesus, reported only in the Gospel of John, is a beautiful and touching one. Jesus is represented as hanging on the cross; and near the last he

sees his mother weeping at the foot of the cross and his beloved disciple John. And he speaks to her, and says, "Woman, behold thy son!" indicating John in some way. And then to John, "Son, behold thy mother!" And from that time, it is said, John took her into his own home. Curiously enough, if such an important event occurred, there is no record anywhere in the Gospels of the death of Joseph, Jesus' father; though of course, if this story is true, he must have been dead, or there would have been no need for anybody else to take care of his wife.

We are now ready to take up the explicit teaching of Jesus in regard to marriage and divorce. It is contained in the tenth chapter of Mark, from the second to the ninth verse. There is substantially the same in Matthew, fifth chapter, beginning with the twenty-seventh verse. In these two passages are all that we need deal with here concerning the teaching of Jesus. That we may see just what the Mosaic law is on the subject, I wish to read to you a few verses from the Book of Deuteronomy, because this is what Jesus refers to, which, he says, was permitted because of the hardness of the hearts of the people at the time. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, then, beginning with the first verse, we read:—

"When a man taketh a wife and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she hath found no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her: that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And, when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her

again to be his wife, after that she is defiled ; for that is abomination before the Lord : and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." There is so much of the Mosaic law as we need deal with. A man was at liberty to divorce his wife at will, only he must give her a record of the fact that she had been properly divorced. Curiously enough, in the Old Testament there is no provision, so far as I remember at the present time, by which a woman may divorce her husband. It seems a very one-sided affair. And, when we come to the teaching of Jesus himself, Jesus gives one cause — faithlessness on the part of the wife — as a ground for divorce ; but there is no hint, so far as I now recall, of a woman's having the right to send her husband away on account of his faithlessness. Here again, in the teaching of Jesus, it seems to be a one-sided matter.

Jesus' teaching, then, concerning marriage is that, in the first instance, God created man male and female, and intended that one husband should have one wife so long as they both should live ; that he permitted polygamy "because of the hardness of their hearts," — because of the impracticability, in that age, of carrying out the higher law ; but that now the necessity for that had passed, and that henceforth one man was to marry one woman, and they were to become one flesh ; and that what God had joined together man was not to put asunder. Only one cause of divorce allowed, and that one faithlessness to the marriage tie. This is the teaching of Jesus concerning marriage and divorce.

The question is raised right here, when we face the fact that, in most of the years that have passed since Jesus gave this teaching, men have not tried to carry it out, most men have not believed that they ought to try to carry it out,—the

question is raised whether it is on account of the hardness and depravity of the human heart, or whether there is some other reason that enters in, and not only explains, but justifies, the course of social civilization in this matter. The question is raised, as it seems to me, at the outset, as to what constitutes marriage. Does the Church marry people? No. Does the State marry people? No. Who does marry people? If there is any marriage, they marry each other. The essence of the marriage is in that inner, sacred bond of love which creates the oneness of those who up to that time had been two. The State has no power to create that inner condition of things : the Church has no power to create it. Now, what is the office of the Church in this matter? The Church has assumed to make it a sacrament : I have no fault to find with this, as far as it concerns the people who agree with the Church. Any man, any organization of men, has a right to hold any opinion concerning a matter like this, so far as it is not imposed by force upon anybody else. Whether marriages are made in heaven, whether there is some transcendental quality about the relation, whether it is a deadly sin to depart from the Church's ordinance in this matter,—these are questions which those who accept the teaching of the Church may be left to answer for themselves, so far as they are concerned. We waive them, then, one side. What, now, is the relation of society, as represented by law? What is the right of the State in the matter?

Looked at from the point of view of the State, marriage is nothing more nor less than a contract, like any other contract whatever. And the only right of the State is to see to it that the terms of the contract are kept ; that is, to regard the rights, and, so far as possible by this clumsy machinery of law, to protect the rights,—whose rights? To protect the right of the wife, to protect the right of the husband, protect the rights

of the children, if there are any, protect the rights of society, because society has rights in this matter; and no one man or one woman has any right, simply in carrying out his or her will, to disturb the social order, or hinder the social evolution towards a higher type of thought and practice. Here, then, is the only question which the State has a right to consider. Marriage, then, resides in this inner, essential condition of the heart and the mind, this spiritual, sympathetic oneness. For, if two people are not one before they come to the minister or the magistrate, then no words which the minister or the magistrate can utter are able to make them one. The minister, for this purpose, is nothing but a magistrate. The civil order, then, is called upon, not to create, but to recognize a fact, and to protect the rights of the persons involved in this fact. That is all the State has to do about it.

Now, the question comes up, after two persons are married, or, as perhaps is very often the case, merely think they are,—after, at any rate, the contract is entered upon, then what? Shall we accept the teaching of Jesus that it is indissoluble? that it is never to be annulled, only for this one cause, and then only on the part of the husband? Does the growing intellectual and moral feeling of civilization indorse the teaching of Jesus to-day? Here we are, friends,—remember that,—somewhere near nineteen hundred years after the time of Jesus; and, for better or worse, the tendency of civilization is away from the teaching of the Nazarene on this point. We must either admit that this teaching of Jesus is not final or else that, in the course of the growth of civilization, we are getting farther and farther away from the truth instead of coming nearer to it. And we must recognize the fact that this tendency does not coincide with a growing social immorality, but precisely the opposite. For

the world to-day is not only unspeakably more intelligent than it was nineteen hundred years ago; but the world is growing every day higher and higher in its moral ideals and its moral practice as well, when we take into account the complexity of our civilization and the large number of persons concerned. And we are to note farther that, in those countries that have been under the dominant influence of the Catholic Church, the Latin countries, the countries where divorce has not been permitted because the Catholic Church has had her way,—and she has always taught this doctrine of Jesus,—we are to note the fact that they are not on a higher level of morality than are the countries which hold the contrary idea. Indeed, the reverse of this, I think, could be easily established.

It is not difficult for people to get frightened over divorce statistics; but divorce statistics may mean something or they may not. It depends entirely upon how they are gathered and what they represent. Statistics of crime are almost, if not quite, the most misleading statistics in the world. In a moral community—a community distinguished for its morality—there may be more criminal convictions in the course of a year than in one that is not half-way up to its level, because there are a great many more laws, a great many more actions are accounted crimes, and so the number of convictions may really indicate a higher moral level instead of a lower one. If we go down to the condition before there was any law, when there was universal lawlessness on the face of the earth, there were no crimes at all then. When we were wild, cannibal barbarians, almost animals, naked in the woods, there were no crimes then, because there were no laws. Nobody was arrested; but that does not mean that they stood on a high level of civilization. It means precisely the opposite. I speak of this merely that

you may regard this matter of statistics as one to be looked into before you come to a conclusion concerning its significance.

Now, let us raise the question as to what, in right, justice, and fairness, would seem to be adequate ground for divorce. You know that different States in this country, and the different countries of the world, differ in their laws in regard to this matter. In this State of Massachusetts there are six or seven legal grounds for divorce. One is that which Jesus makes the only one. Then there is extreme cruelty; then there is desertion for a certain length of time,—two or three years; then there is gross and confirmed habits of intoxication; and there is the fact of a man's being convicted of a crime and imprisoned. These, among others, are recognized in this State as adequate grounds for divorce. I will not go into the discussion of these particular ones, but will tell you what seems to me just and fair in the matter, what seems to be conducive to the highest civilization.

I believe that when marriage actually does not exist, because that inner condition which alone creates it and constitutes it has ceased, then I believe that law has no right to compel people to live together who actually are not married. There seems to me to be the fundamental principle in the matter. The law in the first place recognizes a fact: that is all it has to do about it. When that fact ceases to exist, the law ought to recognize that. That is the simple general principle. But here come in complications that need to be regarded. What are they? Why, the husband or the wife might cease to love, one or the other, while the other continues to love. I do not believe that ordinarily divorce should be allowed in a case like that. The man or woman, whichever it may be, has voluntarily taken upon himself or herself a contract to see to it that the happiness and welfare

of the other shall be maintained. That contract is sacred and binding, so long as the happiness and welfare of the other depends upon it. Then there are children to be considered, and their rights and training; though I do not believe that husband and wife should always be kept together on account of the children. I believe that frequently the circumstances may be such that for the sake of the children they should not be kept together. There should be wisdom and discretion in regard to this matter, the attempt to come at the facts, and decide it in such a way that the real rights and welfare of all parties concerned shall be attained, so far as the circumstances may permit.

I think that, in order to overcome the evils of divorce, we need to begin at the other end. I do not think law can do much about it, however. We ought to make marriages a little more difficult, and the getting out of them sometimes a little less difficult. I think that people now get married too easily, too thoughtlessly, without consideration of what is involved. But law cannot do much about it. The evils here, like a thousand evils in other directions, must be cured by the growth of a higher ideal, a more unselfish kind of living, a nobler type of character. But, I believe, as I have said, that the fundamental principle is this: that, when the marriage actually ceases to exist, then, if the rights of the children and the rights of society are consistent with it, the fact that it has ceased to exist ought to be recognized, and the parties left to go free. I would, however, not make it possible for a divorce to be too hastily granted, because many and many a time husband and wife might fly apart in a passion, and in a week, or in six months, or in a year, both of them regret their action. I have one typical example in my mind. I know of a wealthy gentleman in this country, who obtained a divorce from his wife, and then inside of a

year or two fell in love with her over again, and was married a second time ; and they are living happily to-day. Perhaps if they had taken a little more time, and had thought a little more about it, they would not have needed the second marriage at all.

I am not able to spend any more time on this phase of the subject. There is one other element of the first importance in the teaching of Jesus that I must note before I close. We sometimes wonder, we Protestants, at the spirit of asceticism, monasticism, in the Catholic Church. We are accustomed to say that it was a departure from the teaching of Jesus, a falling away from the recognized first principles of Christianity. I confess that we are here face to face with a practical difficulty which I do not know how to resolve. Jesus in the Gospels is represented as mingling with publicans and sinners, attending parties and feasts, drinking wine, partaking of the ordinary joys of the common people of his age, indorsing them. And yet there is this other representation, a distinct and definite teaching as to asceticism. The whole system of monasticism, the whole idea of the celibacy of the clergy, the idea of the single life being purer and higher, is all contained as a germ in the teaching of Jesus himself. I do not know how many of you have noticed it. I ask you to read and ponder over the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, from the ninth to the twelfth verses. Here he declares, when his disciples are asking him questions concerning this matter of marriage and divorce, that there are some who by nature are unfitted for marriage, and they live the single life ; there are some who have been rendered unfit by their fellow-men, and they live the single life ; there are some who have chosen it for the sake of the kingdom of God. And he declares, in so many words, that if any one is able to receive this doctrine, if he can rise to the high

level of this idea, then let him receive it. In other words, Jesus teaches explicitly and clearly that the celibate life is highest and purest, nearest the divine ideal. This in spite of the fact that he is represented as doing the contrary thing in other places. So, by the ordinary principles of interpretation, I see not why the celibacy of the clergy, and the whole monastic system, cannot be traced to the definite words of the Nazarene.

As a matter of fact, then, the world did not begin where Jesus represents it as having begun. He implies in this teaching his belief in the Garden of Eden and the special creation of Adam and Eve. We know that it began ages before that time, and in entirely another way. As a matter of fact, Christendom itself, in the main, does not practise the teaching of Jesus concerning marriage and divorce; and, as the world grows in civilization, it is growing not towards, but away from, literal obedience to that teaching. One thing indeed is true, if we leave the literal teaching, and simply fix our attention on that ideal of one man and one woman, and they twain as one flesh. We do believe that the world is growing towards the realization of that. I believe that the time will come when there shall be no need of any divorce laws, or marriage laws either for that matter; for, when law is written in the heart, and men and women fully desire the right, no longer are willing selfishly to sacrifice other people on the altar of their own wills,—in that day the highest will be freely lived out, as a flower freely unfolds itself in the air and the light of heaven.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

HAVING devoted myself, in previous sermons of this course, to taking up and discussing certain phases of the teaching of Jesus as to belief and life, my purpose this morning is to discuss somewhat, in a more general way, the methods, the nature, and the scope of that teaching. As best suited for my purpose, I take the Sermon on the Mount, as embodying in some large and general way the spirit and the purpose of the teaching of Jesus. I may not confine myself strictly to this sermon : I may allude to other teaching kindred to it, possibly quote from other parts of the New Testament, if they suit my purpose. But this will be the centre of that which I am to consider ; and I wish not only to touch upon the letter of it, but at the end to see if we can find the spirit, the soul, that eternal part of the teaching of Jesus which no criticism can touch, and which we may expect to abide.

We are not, I suppose, to regard this as a sermon in the sense usually attached to that word. We are not to think of Jesus as having delivered the whole of it just as it stands, at any one time. Matthew, indeed, says that he "went up into a mountain, and, when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them," so that you would think from Matthew's account that the whole of it was given just as he has reported it. Luke, on the other hand, tells us that he went up into a mountain to pray, and that the next morning he came down into the plain, and

then he goes on to say that he uttered certain remarkable sayings which he gives us as his version of the Sermon on the Mount. You will notice, however, that the passage in Luke does not contain as much matter as does the sermon as reported by Matthew; and you will notice also that there is no trace of the sermon in John's Gospel or in Mark's. Undoubtedly, the truth is that there was a tradition that Jesus had, on some certain occasion, delivered himself more at length concerning some of the great ideas of his kingdom than he was accustomed to; and that, when Matthew collected together the "Sayings" of Jesus,—or the editor, for Matthew himself did not do it,—he grouped thus all the sayings which seemed naturally to belong together, and which it was not necessary to put somewhere else because of a special connection with some incident or happening in his career. These, then, are the general sayings of Jesus, gathered, grouped together, in this arbitrary fashion. For, if you look through it, you will see that there is no sort of natural or logical connection, as you pass from topic to topic. So far as we can see, the Sermon on the Mount would not be injured by taking it to pieces and putting it together in almost any other order we please, because there is no logical line of thought running through it from the beginning to the end. Jesus was not an orator in that sense. He did not deliver long public addresses on any occasion, so far as we know. He was a teller of parables, he was an utterer of aphorisms, springing out of this connection or that. He uttered these grand sayings of his life; and they stand alone, each one embodying some great principle or idea, lifting the soul on the wings of some wondrous aspiration.

I wish to note right here, in connection with this Sermon on the Mount, one side of the character of Jesus. I had thought at one time of making it the theme of an entire

discourse ; but, as I thought of it, it did not seem wise or necessary to do so. I can here, and properly enough in this connection, say all that I wish to say in regard to it. I allude to the intellectual side of the life and teaching of Jesus. It is most remarkable, I think, that, though we must place Jesus among the very greatest of all time, and in some respects, and those the highest, must place him first among the greatest,—it is most remarkable, I think, that there is nothing that we can ever think of as specially intellectual in his teaching. The intellectual side of the man, pure and simple, does not impress itself upon us. To show what I mean : Jesus has never one word to say on such a matter as education. He is not a theorizer : he is not a teacher in that sense. He says nothing whatever, that I remember at the present time, in regard to the education of the people. He has nothing whatever to say about art. For anything that he has left, you might suppose that the idea of art had never entered into his mind. He does not say anything about the beauty or the grandeur of nature, even, for its own sake,—never a word of the stars, of the night sky, of the wonder and magnificence of mountain or ocean,—no trace of our modern love of nature. He does, indeed, speak of the lilies of the field, and of certain beautiful aspects of the world around him, but never for their own sake, never calling attention to their beauty for beauty's sake,—always with a moral and spiritual purpose in his mind. He never says anything about philosophy. You would not know from anything that he has left on record, or that has been left on record concerning him, that he had ever heard that there was a philosopher in existence, ever had been or ever would be. He has nothing whatever to say about science ; no word,—and here is the striking thing to me about it,—no word to say about truth for its own sake. That spirit which animates the scientist, seeking after the truth

of things, without any regard to its utility or application, finds no place apparently in him. And the Christian Church, perhaps following him in this regard, has never laid any emphasis on truth-seeking for truth-seeking's sake or as an intellectual virtue. It has been, on the part of the Church, something to be repressed. I searched once, as an illustration of this, all the hymn-books that I could find in Christendom; and I could not find anywhere a single hymn addressed to truth, to intellectual truth, to the seeking for truth, or of which that was the inspiration. The first hymn of that kind that I ever saw in my life I wrote myself.

Then take certain other phases of the world. Jesus has nothing to say to help the world solve its intellectual problems as such, in any direction. He does not express any opinion concerning matters of government, as to whether one kind of political institution is preferable over another,—nothing whatever concerning liberty, human freedom, in the modern sense of the word. The only reference that I recall now to matters of government is that incidental one where the tribute money is brought to him; and he says, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's"; but no criticism on Cæsar, no question as to his government. Again, so far as Jesus is concerned, you would suppose that there never had been or would be any industrial problems in the world, no recognition of any of these great questions that face and threaten us at the present time. The only thing he did say about the poor and the rich is apparently to condemn the rich and to cheer and lift up the poor, and to advise those that have freely to give to those that have not; that is, the ordinary doctrine of charity. He has nothing, again, to say to help the world solve its social problems. So far, then, as this side of Jesus' thinking and life is concerned, there is nothing that need

detain us. I speak of this, not by way of criticism, but simply by way of definition; and, before I am through, you will find that it is a serious question as to whether we are to think of this as a fault, a lack, in any way in the character of Jesus. For his attention was fixed on things deeper, things higher than any surface problems that perplex and discourage us.

I wish now, in such a way as I have never done in my life before on a similar occasion, to run over with you the main teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, touching it superficially in this way, and then asking you to go with me in seeking for the soul, the spirit, of this sermon.

Let us, then, glance at its topics. The first are these wonderful Beatitudes. I suppose it is a problem that criticism is not able to solve as to whether all of these are in just the words which Jesus spoke. For Luke, in his sixth chapter, gives us, "Blessed are ye poor" instead of "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are ye that hunger" instead of "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness." If Jesus did not utter the words as they are in Matthew, certain it is that the words as written in Matthew are infinitely above and beyond those as recorded in Luke. So I love to think that these are the words that he actually spoke. "Blessed are the pure in heart," as being the only ones that shall ever see God,—nothing higher, finer, than that has ever been uttered in the literature of the world. "Blessed are the peace-makers, blessed are those persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Then his disciples, those that are true and noble, are the salt, the preserving power, in the earth. They are lamps, lighted and on a lamp-stand, not hidden, so that they can give light to all that are in the house. In other words, Jesus teaches us that it is our duty, if we have any light or help

for men, not to enjoy it exclusively as a personal possession, but to hold it for the benefit of the world.

The next point is where he speaks of the law as a finality, or rather as a permanent thing, to be fulfilled, not something which is to pass away. But here again, at the end, though he seems to recognize the ritual as a permanent element in the religious life, the spirit in him flames out and above all the thought of his age ; for he says, "Unless your righteousness is more than even this perfected righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, there can be no place for you in the coming kingdom."

The next point is where he goes very deeply into the principle that I shall wish to bear on emphatically as I advance, where he tells people that in the old time it was said, "Thou shalt not kill" ; but he goes deep with his probe into the heart : "If you hate, if you wish your enemies were out of the way, you are murderers." This is the teaching of Jesus, this inwardness on which I shall dwell a little later.

Then comes the teaching with which I dealt the other Sunday at length, and so need not stop for it now,—his law of marriage and divorce. And, then, I wonder at those who think this Sermon on the Mount is divine, unchanging, to be everywhere obeyed, when I come face to face with what he has said with regard to oaths. "Swear not at all" ; and yet every country in Christendom has compelled men to swear as a political duty.

The next point is where he speaks of the law of retaliation, and brings out the doctrine that we are not to resist evil. That I have dwelt upon, so that I shall not spend any further time here. But here again, in every place where there is opportunity for it, this central spirit of Jesus goes out in such a wondrous display of power and life as I find from the lips of no other teacher that ever lived. "Love

your enemies, do good to them that curse you." Love, love, love,—the solution of all the problems of the world. For in this way, and in this way only, do we become perfect, as the Father in heaven is perfect. I shall speak on that a little later.

The next point, as we open the sixth chapter, is where he tells people that they are not to make a display of their religion. "Do not do your alms to be seen of men,"—inwardness again, the quality of the heart and the spirit as the one great thing; the Father knows. The same principle precisely in regard to prayer. "Do not pray in the synagogues and in public places: go apart, the child-spirit with the Father-spirit, and commune with him." There are one or two points in the Lord's Prayer, as I pass, that are worthy of note. Theodore Parker always objected to praying, "Lead us not into temptation," because, he said, it seemed to carry the implication that God was capable of doing it,—which hurt his thought of the perfect love and care of the Father. I wish you to note also that in the Lord's Prayer is taught the existence of the devil,—“deliver us from the evil one,” when properly translated. And then the doxology, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory" is undoubtedly a later addition, no part of the words of Jesus.

Then comes the doctrine of forgiveness. "If you forgive men, God will forgive you; if not, not." Do not think for a moment that that means that God retaliates, that he sets up a standard, and says, "If you do not come up to it, I will not save you." It is one of those profound utterances of essential and eternal truth: If you do not cultivate the forgiving spirit, then you cannot be forgiven and brought into the likeness of God, because that spirit *is* the likeness of God. There is an essential, eternal contradiction there; and God cannot forgive except as you let him make you like himself.

Then there is the doctrine of secrecy again, concerning fasting; and then the teaching concerning treasure, the true treasure of life, whether it is to be among the things that we ordinarily call possessions or in the spirit realm of real things that cannot be touched by moth or rust.

And then the doctrine of not worrying about the future. If we are to take that literally, no man ever did obey it, no man can obey it, no man ought to obey it. And yet, friends, the spirit and life in that seems to me the profoundest wisdom. We must look out for the future; and yet, if we worry too much about it, we are incapacitated both for future and present.

Then we are not to judge. Leave judgment with the only One in the universe who knows. And you are to note your own faults and try to get rid of them rather than fix your attention on the faults of your brethren.

Then you are to expect to receive anything and everything that you really need. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." I believe there is no profounder truth in the universe than that,—not, mark you, that we are to have, as the result of lip-asking and then sitting still, anything we desire. But, if there be in us, a part of our real nature, a profound, uplifting, earnest desire and need for anything, it shall be. I believe God's omnipotence, his wisdom and love, are pledged to that. That has been the inspiration of poets, the dream of prophets; and it ought to be the comfort of our souls. I believe that whatever I need, whatever is a part of my life, shall be mine, pledged by the omnipotent wisdom and love. This, I take it, is the essential doctrine of prayer, as Jesus teaches it. "For if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall the Infinite Father give to us the things we need!"

Then concerning the strait gate. It has been true in all ages. The gate that leads to truth, the gate that leads to good, is always a very narrow gate, and in any age there have only been a few that have found it.

Then that great doctrine which seems to contradict, in a way, but does not, another great doctrine of his, that we are to know things by their outside. You are to know people, institutions, movements of every kind, by their results, by their fruits. And yet in another passage he tells them that they are not to look at the outside to know the nature, the character, the qualities of things. There is no contradiction, however, as I said, between them, because in the long run the fruitage is only the expression of that which is the real inner quality and life. Sometimes there may be the appearance of good fruit on an evil tree; but in the long run grape-vines bear grapes, thorns thorns, thistles thistles, and figs figs, so that you can trust the fruit to represent the quality of the life.

And then, coming on toward the culmination and fitting close, he says that not every one who says, "Lord, Lord!" shall enter into the kingdom,—not the ritualist, not the one who expresses this outward devotion, not the one who talks about it, but the one who does the will of the Father. And, then, he that has heard these sayings, these spiritual principles, and who makes them the foundation of his life-structure, the rains may descend, the winds blow and beat upon it, but it shall stand. It is those that build their lives on error, on falsehood, on selfishness, on other than spiritual principles eternal and true,—it is these who are not to stand the test, and in the hour of trial are to find the foundations giving way.

I wished to run over with you in this way this Sermon on the Mount, so that you might have it spread out before you.

There is a large part of it that we cannot literally accept, that the world never has literally accepted,—that men, even while praising it and calling it divine, have not tried to obey. And yet there is, running through it, a spirit, a life, which has given it its hold on the world. And I predict that, as years go by, that hold will not loosen, but will rather become firmer and firmer. In other words, I believe that, while we may be growing from much that has passed as Christianity, while we may be growing away from much that has passed as the teaching of Jesus, when we come at the real essential soul and life of Jesus, we have found that ideal which still leads the world as unapproached and unapproachable as the morning star. I believe that it is the religion of Jesus—not necessarily Christianity—which is to dominate the highest and finest and sweetest life of the future.

I ask you now to consider two or three principles which seem to me to constitute the very soul of the Sermon on the Mount and of the main teaching of Jesus. And, in the first place, note that principle of love which he everywhere puts first and foremost. I do not know any other religion that the world has ever seen that puts love at the front, makes it foundation and capstone at the same time, in the way that Jesus puts it. Love with him is everything. Love is first, middle, last, all. Love is the fulfilling of the law, we are told in the New Testament, which is only an echo of the teaching of Jesus. And here we are ready to note what I alluded to in an earlier part of the sermon. Jesus did not say much about the solution of the intellectual problems of the world; but he did call the life of the world to the principle, the force, which is capable of working out practically the perfect solution of them all, and that is this very principle of love. Think for a moment: if love dominated the hearts, the lives, of all people, if it were the real working

principle of all people, the form of government would not mean much. Though it were a despotism, it would have to be a kindly and loving and unselfish despotism, so that nobody would feel it. If it were the purest democracy, it could hardly have any different effect, so far as the practical life of the world were concerned. Love, then, would solve all political difficulties of the world. And nothing else is ever going to solve them, either. As I have had occasion to tell you more than once, we may speculate as much as we please about our political and social organization, but we shall never get the perfect condition of the world until love has its way; and, when it is the law, these things become secondary in importance. The method of Jesus, then,—cultivating love as the one divine principle in human life,—is the only method for settling these great problems. The same is true with our social, our industrial problems. You cannot, with all your ingenuity, devise laws or methods for the settlement of these things that will prevent tyranny on the one hand and hate on the other, that will prevent smothering dislike and disturbance in every direction. But once let love be the guiding, shaping principle of human life, and State Boards of Arbitration and legal attempts to regulate the industry of the world, will be utterly uncalled for; for things will regulate themselves. Love, then, is the first, middle, last, deepest, highest, the one all-embracing word of Jesus.

Then note, in the second place, an extension of this idea: love for what? Christianity has sadly misrepresented Jesus. Jesus puts love for man first, not love for God. I am perfectly well aware that he quoted from Hillel,—I am not sure whether he was conscious of quoting it or whether it was simply a saying in the air,—that remarkable condensation of the law into the two great commandments,—first, love for God, and then equal love for the neigh-

bor. But Jesus said something profounder than that, in my judgment, in that saying of which I have spoken a great many times, because it seems to me to be in some way the most remarkable saying that ever fell from his lips, "When thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." In other words, the profoundest teaching of Jesus places love for man before love for God, and declares that the only way by which you can show your love for God is through your love for man. Again, it is an echo only of Jesus when we find in the Epistle of John that sharp saying, "If any man say, I love God, and love not his brother, he is a liar. For, if a man love not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"

So Jesus tells you frankly and squarely, if you wish to come into the presence of God, you cannot do it, you cannot find the foot of his throne, you can find no approach or access to the divine, except through love for your fellow-men. And if you have loved your fellow-men, and are in right relations with them, then you do love God without having thought anything about it. The worst thing, almost, about the great religions of the past has been that man has been forgotten and trampled on, in the supposed necessity for loving God and serving God and praising God and praying to God and honoring God. Every persecution, every human sacrifice, every bitterness of heresy trial,—the story of the Albigenses, the Inquisition, the Huguenots in France, the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, the expulsion of the Jews to-day from Russia,—all these great persecuting, slaying, hating, bloody movements of the world have had, as the mainspring and motive, God, fear of God or claimed love of

God or desire to serve God. But Jesus says, "Love men first: and it is a pretence and a sham to claim to love God until you do love men." This pitiful idea of trying to save our souls instead of caring for the souls and bodies of our fellow-men,—this has been the warper and perverter of religion in all ages. The world will not be saved until the spirit of this great teaching of Jesus is listened to and wrought out in the life of his Church. And the Church—I care not for its creeds—will never be the Church of Jesus until it is the Church of human love and human service. It seems to me that, if God deigns to look down upon those countries at all, it must grieve him to the heart to note such lands as Mexico, as Spain, as certain parts of Canada,—that which is under the dominance of the Catholic Church,—where all the wealth, all the luxury, all the magnificence, is given to God who needs nothing, while it is stripped from the poor, ignorant, starving, trampled down humanity that needs everything. This is what the service of God comes to, when the love of man is left out of account. This is not the teaching of Jesus: it is directly in the face of the teaching of Jesus.

One other point, and that of the utmost importance. Not only in the Sermon on the Mount, but everywhere, Jesus teaches the principle of inwardness instead of outwardness; that is, that we are to be judged, in the sight of God, not by our outward actions, but by what we are, think, feel, purpose, in our hearts. Very likely here is the solution of the apparent contradiction that I referred to, when I spoke of judging things by their fruits. He tells men that they are to judge by the fruits: perhaps this is because men have no way of seeing the heart, and cannot judge by any truer standard. But God, who reads the heart, he tells us, judges only by that. And, if we would do a thing if we could, then we have done it in his sight. And this not only comes as a

principle of judgment, but as a principle of cheer, uplifting, consolation; for the good things we tried to do and could not, the grand things we dreamed of and were not able to realize, the ideals we cherished, but could never put into actual form, visible among men,—these things are they that have revealed to God what we really are. We are all of us worse, and we are all of us better, than we appear. Probably all of us have wished or longed some time to do evil things that we have not done; and all of us have longed for great and sweet and high things we have never been able to achieve. And it is by this inward principle of the heart that we are to be judged. And the world, friends,—that is the point, I take it, the central, deepest point in the teaching of Jesus,—the world is never to be saved until the law of God, the law of right, the law of love for man, is so written in the heart, so become the instinctive mainspring and motive of life, that we shall do right without thinking and without trying. If we ever become ideal and perfect, the word “duty,” and the sense of duty, will have faded out of human language and human life. We shall not do things because we think we ought to: we shall do all that is fair and sweet because the mainspring, the purpose, the thought, the heart, the life, have become what they ought to be, and because these fair and sweet and fine things are merely the natural out-blossoming of what we are.

One other point, and that briefly. Jesus teaches, and teaches all the way through, what all the highest souls since that day have gained glimpses of and have tried to teach also,—that the one thing of importance in this life is the life itself. “The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.” “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the

mouth of God." The soul-life, the spirit-life — this life which means thought and feeling and aspiration and hope,—the invisible in us, the real humanity in us,—this, Jesus teaches, is all. Money, if you please ; yes, but money to serve that. Social position, if you please ; yes, but social position merely as an opportunity for that. Education, if you will ; yes, but intellectual education only for the sake of guiding the life. All things else,—power, opportunity, everything we can dream, everything we can achieve, everything we can gain possession of,—all these merely for the life. More life, he says. "I have come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

Here, then, are the eternal things of the Sermon on the Mount,—such eternal, such high spiritual things as are not to be touched by criticism, and are never to pass away. Love as the solvent of all human difficulties and problems, love for man here, and before any possible love for God there ; the inward purpose and motive, not the outward action, either of merit or demerit ; and then this conscious spiritual life, the laying up treasure, not in some other place called heaven,—I do not think Jesus meant that,—the laying up treasure in this interior, spiritual, mental, moral world, the treasure of thought, the treasure of love, the treasure of goodness, the treasure of character, the treasure that nothing can touch, the treasure that you carry with you out of your crumbling house of the body, the treasure that the crash of worlds could not touch or a final conflagration burn, that treasure which makes you one with God, and assures that, because he lives, you shall live also.

Here is that in the Sermon on the Mount which gives it permanent hold on the love and reverence of the world. This it is which shall continue to make it an inspiration, a comfort, a star of leadership, in all the years to be.

JESUS AND THE CHRIST-IDEALS.

THE imaginative or idealizing power is one of the most common as it is one of the most important. It helps us to see things truly; and it also, according as it is used, helps us to pervert and see things falsely. This idealizing faculty is a power that is able to take all the hard, crude facts of the world, and remould them as if they were the most plastic material possible. One person is able to see what another person does not discover, because of this idealizing tendency on the part of the one, or because, while both may equally be possessed of this power, one applies it in one direction and another in another. I wish this morning to treat of the actual historic Jesus, so far as we can discover him, and then to note some of the Christ-ideals that have dominated the thought of Christendom.

At the outset, however, in order that our way may be clear, let us note the power of this idealizing tendency, as illustrated in two or three familiar directions. Take it, for example, of the childhood home of each one of us,—the country about the old house, if it was in the country; the old house itself; father, mother, brothers, sisters, neighbors. We know perfectly well that we have idealized all these things through the power of our own tender and loving imagination. If that old home could be re-created to-day, very likely we should not find there all that we see through the mist of memory; and, at any rate, it is true that another person, a stranger, going to that home with us, would see, per-

haps, very little of what is clear and vivid in our own thought and in our own imagination. In other words, you see — and you know how common a fact it is — that this idealizing power of ours reshapes facts, clothes facts with a glamour that no other eyes can see, and so makes a world for each one of us to live in, into which no other person, perhaps, is ever able to enter.

This is true in matters of travel. I have been in Europe, and have visited certain historic spots with a man who was a very matter-of-fact man,— a successful business man, but not a student, not a man who had made himself familiar with history. And, as we stood in the presence of some old castle or on some historic field, he saw very little. He saw all that my outward eye could see, but the place was not alive to him: no historic figures were there, no historic incidents were re-enacted before him as he stood and looked. There was only the bare ground and the bare walls; and it seemed a very commonplace matter, indeed. So you see what a part the ideal plays in enabling us to see places, see buildings, see illustrations of the historic past.

This ideal power re-creates whole epochs. If we could be transported into the Middle Ages, and visit the lands of chivalry after reading Walter Scott, after reading novel and history both that try to reproduce the atmosphere of this poetic period in the past of the world, how much of it, think you, should we see? That whole period of the Middle Ages is covered with a glamour, like a mist that changes as we look, that softens down the harsh facts, that covers up the ugliness, and enables each one of us to see that which we have read of, that which we have dreamed about, that which has been suggested to us by the novelist, historian, or poet. It recasts, also, historic characters. Let me give one or two illustrations out of the old Bible.

David, so far as we can get at him historically, was a cruel, hard man of blood. He began his life as an outlaw, a rebel. He became king ; but he was an unforgiving, hard man. The very last act of his life, as he was on his death-bed, was an act of treachery: he had promised one of his generals that he would not put him to death ; but the very last thing he does, as he is dying, is to make it imperative upon his successor that he put him to death the moment the breath is out of his own body. This is the David of history. The David of the pious imagination, the David of song, the David of tradition, is a sweet and tender shepherd, a loving king, and the singer of all the Psalms. The probability is that he may have written one or two or possibly four of the Psalms, but no more. Here is the power of the idealizing imagination in re-creating the facts concerning a personal life. Take Solomon. Solomon came to be the ideal wise man of the Hebrews. And just as to-day, if you see any joke floating about the newspapers that you cannot father in any other way, you attribute it to Sydney Smith or some other famous wit, so all the wise sayings and proverbs and songs outside of the Psalms in the Hebrew literature came to be attributed to Solomon. I was brought up to believe that all the proverbs in the Book of Proverbs were written by Solomon, and that Solomon's Song was written by Solomon. The Proverbs are simply a collection of national proverbs. We do not know that Solomon was the author of a single one of them, or, if he was, of how many ; and we know that he was not the author of the Song attributed to him. These are ancient illustrations of the power of the ideal to transform and pervert facts of history.

We need not go so far back to find this. Take the character of Charles I. in English history. What kind of man was he? The followers of Cromwell, the Roundheads,

looked upon him as the incarnation of every conceivable kind of evil, which certainly he was not. On the other hand, the Loyalists, the Churchmen, consecrated his memory, and thought of him as a martyr: he even got into the Prayer-book as "that blessed martyr." Now, he was neither the worst man of the age, nor was he the best man. The ideal of the Roundhead was not true: the ideal of the Loyalist was not true. Charles was a very well-meaning, somewhat wrong-headed man; a man who believed that his sceptre had been given him of God, and that he had a right to it as a personal possession, and a right to use it in what the people came to regard as a tyrannical way,—that is all. He was a very good man, indeed, of his kind. Come down to our own age for just one or two more suggestions in this direction. Take the character of Washington. The Washington of our ideal is so far from the reality that, if we should meet George Washington, as he lived and fought in the army, we should probably not recognize him. We have smoothed off all the roughnesses, removed all the faults and foibles, until he is hardly a man. I remember with what an intense relief the knowledge first came to me that Washington really had some faults,—that he could get angry, and that, under the strain of tremendous provocation, he was now and then profane. I say it was a relief to me, because I said, "Why, he is a man after all, and not a monster of perfection."

Take the tendency of this idealizing power in the opposite direction, in the case of Thomas Paine. Hardly a fact in Thomas Paine's life that has not been perverted by the tendency of the New England ideal to make a monster of him. So far as his opinions on religion are concerned, they would be looked upon to-day as a little conservative. He was a sort of forerunner — mistaken many times, and crude — of

modern criticism. But, instead of being the monster that he is looked upon in the popular imagination of New England, instead of being execrated and outcast, in spite of his faults, he was so true and noble a man, and such patriotic service did he render this country, that he ought to have a statue instead of the execration of the people. These, then, as hints of what the idealizing tendency of the world can do, both in one direction and the other. Now let us turn to Jesus of Nazareth. What do we really know about the man?

We know that he was born — we do not know what year, but a little before the Christian era — in Nazareth; that his father was Joseph, and his mother was Mary; that his father was a carpenter. We have one little, delightful glimpse of his boyhood; and then we see nothing more of him until he is thirty years of age. He appears, and is baptized of John in the Jordan. At John's death he takes up the work of preaching the immediate coming of the kingdom of God. He wanders with his disciples from village to village, from lake shore to mountain side in Galilee, preaching the coming of this kingdom, and living a simple, loving, helpful, ideal life,—preaching with such wonderful power and simplicity that his words echo still down the ages. He visits Jerusalem, and here he comes in conflict with the prejudices of his people and with the Roman authorities; and after a little less than a year and a half of public life he is put to death. Now this, in outline of course, is all that we know of the Man of Nazareth. Here is the history of that unique life, brief though it was, and those wondrous words that the world has come to love more and more, and will love more and more. A wonderful man!

Turn now, and see what the idealizing tendency of the world has made of this simple life. See how many different ideals, how mutually exclusive, how mutually contradictory,

have been held concerning him. In the first place, the belief began to grow, even before his crucifixion, shared in probably by himself during the last part of his ministry, that he was the Jewish Messiah. Now, these lives that we have of him, as you know, are growths. They were recorded somewhere from forty to fifty years after his time; and during that period this idealizing tendency had been at work. Let me ask you to note two or three examples of it as bearing upon this ideal of the Messiah.

He was the Christ; that is, the Messiah; that is the first. And this supposition that he was the Messiah then proceeded to re-create nearly all the known facts of his life. In the first place, the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Why? Because he is a son of David, and this was David's city; and it was the universal national expectation that he was to be born in Bethlehem. After it became firmly settled in the minds of the people that Jesus was the Christ, then of course he was born in Bethlehem; and that fact of the history was rewritten, or written in the first place under the shaping power of that idea. He was a son of David. Curiously enough, the popular tendency insisted on that, right square in the face of the very words of Jesus himself; for Jesus argues at length on one occasion that the Messiah need not be the son of David at all. But he was, so the popular imagination said; and they constructed a genealogy for him, contained in the Gospels,—a genealogical table, in one case reaching back to David, and in the other clear back to Abraham and Adam,—to prove that he was a descendant of David. But, curiously enough,—you see how this imagination worked in a contradictory way,—this genealogical table came into existence while it was still believed by the people that Joseph was his father. So it is the genealogy of Joseph, having nothing whatever to do with him in accordance with

the later idea that Joseph was not his father. And then another fact. You see how this idealizing tendency works. Take that *naïve* and curious saying of Constantine,—I can only quote it from memory: he said it was fitting that a wonderful being like this should invent a new way of being born. And so the Messiah, according to a perverted interpretation of an Old Testament passage which has no reference to him whatever, becomes the child of a virgin. I speak of these only as illustrations of it. His whole life was recast. Prophecies were ransacked to find out what the Messiah ought to be and to do; and then Jesus was and did those things. Prophecies were perverted, misinterpreted. Prophecies are quoted that we cannot trace even the existence of. So this ideal Jesus, as the Christ, comes into existence. He is the Messiah. The Man of Nazareth, the simple teacher about the ways of Galilee, disappears; and a king, a descendant of David, born in the royal city, clothed upon with royal powers, takes his place,—the creation of this idealizing tendency in manufacturing the Christ.

But another step is taken. We trace two or three different steps, even within the limits of the New Testament. With Paul, while he is always the Christ, he is something more: he is the second Adam. Adam was the head of this order of fallen men and women, this fleshly and corrupt creation as we see it. The Christ, pre-existent, "the first-born of every creature,"—not God yet, but only the first one that was created,—he comes into this world to institute a new, divine order of humanity. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." There was to be no death in this new kingdom: it was to be a spiritual kingdom, freed from all the limitations and evils of the old order of humanity that found its source in the old Adam.

Yet another step: there comes the necessity for bridging over the supposed gulf between God and the world. A tendency, that you need to understand in order to comprehend the growth of the doctrine of the Trinity, had long been going on, not only among Jews, but other peoples as well. Among the Jews God became ever more and more exalted; and, as he became more exalted, he became farther removed from the world, until, when you come to Philo, the great philosopher of the time of Jesus, he thought that no assertion whatever could be made about God. You could not say that he was good, for he was more than goodness: you could not say that he was wise without derogation, for he was more than wisdom. So the Jewish race came to bow in silence before the Ineffable One. It came to be considered wrong even to speak his name: he was afar off, and a great gulf existed between him and the world. The gods of Greece and Rome were human enough; but among other Oriental nations besides the Jews this tendency to remove God from matter had been going on for years, until at last the belief became popular — we find traces of it in the New Testament itself, rightly understood — that God could not have been the Creator. He could have nothing to do with matter: even to create it was an imperfection and pollution. So he was separated from all this universe, which was the home of the human race. As the result, then, of philosophical speculation, the attempt to get God and man together, there rose the necessity for some doctrine like that which culminated at last in the Trinity; and Jesus becomes the second person in the Eternal Trinity. He is not God exclusively nor man exclusively. In some mysterious way he is both; and so he bridges this gulf, and becomes the mediator between man and God. So here you have the third in the list of the Christ-ideals. We see here no trace of the simple son of the

carpenter. Jesus would have been horrified at the blasphemy of calling him God. When some one called him "good," he put it away from himself, saying, "No one is good save God." He never arrogated to himself any of these qualities or characteristics. This second person of the Trinity was the creation of this idealizing tendency of the world, working on the facts of the simple life in Galilee, until the son of the carpenter becomes the eternal God of the universe.

But still another step is taken, as we trace the growth of this man, now seated on the throne. The tendency ever is that the Father is pushed into the background, and the Christ assumes the office and the functions of the Father. He is now the one to whom people pray. God is almost lost sight of. Jesus never hinted that any one might pray to him. He is the one at the mention of whose name all knees bow. In the churches, some churches, even to-day, they do not bow at the mention of the name of God, but only at the name of the Christ. And this tendency went on until Jesus became almost exclusively, in the popular imagination, the Judge. If you wish to see what the cruel, crude, but powerful idealizing imagination of the Middle Ages could do, visit the Sistine Chapel, and look upon the "Last Judgment," painted by Michael Angelo. Here the Christ is no longer the tender, merciful, loving friend of man, who was ready to forgive and comfort and cheer. He is the Judge, a second Jove, hurling his thunderbolts, and pursuing with fire and hate those who had not accepted him, even down to the lowest depths of hell. And out of this tendency on the part of the people came the worship of Mary. The Son of Man, the loving friend, the brother, is gone: the people must have something human in the heavens; and so they lift up Mary, and plead with her to intercede with her Son, who was

the intercessor with God, but who has come practically to take the place of God.

Still another transformation. You must know, as the result of this tendency on the part of men to reshape facts to fit their ideals, Jesus came to be at last, in the thought of the world after the Renaissance,—when this tendency became exaggerated,—then, and in the early Protestant belief, he came to be the suffering Messiah ; that is, the sacrifice, the one who was offered to God to appease his wrath. The governmental theory of the atonement was prevalent. Here was a governmental exigency. Somebody had got to be punished ; and, if man was to be forgiven and saved, then a substitute must be found. And so, as Jesus was put to death, the idea dominated the thought of man for ages that the second person of the Holy Trinity offered himself voluntarily as this sacrifice ; and he became the object on which, in all literalness, God poured out the fury of his wrath. For it was thought, since he was an infinite being, and could so suffer infinitely in a short space of time, he actually did suffer in hell, where he went during the time between his crucifixion and resurrection,—that he actually did suffer all that the human race would have suffered in hell through all the ages. The ideal then came to be of a “man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” ; one who was bruised for our transgressions, smitten for our iniquities ; one on whom the Lord had laid all the burdens of the world’s sorrows and the world’s sins. That fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which had nothing whatever to do with the Messiah in the thought of the writers of the old Hebrew people, became reinterpreted, and was applied to Jesus, or to the Christ rather, as the sacrifice and the suffering God. I remember standing one day in a church in Rome, and looking at a picture, which the attendant said was not often seen, painted by Guido. I

shall never forget it to the last day of my life,—such a picture of concentrated agony as haunts my imagination still. The tradition says that Guido—for they did rough things in those old days—had a man whom he tortured and starved day after day, in order that he might watch his agonies and might paint his Christ. At any rate, it seemed as though all the sufferings that could be endured for years were pent up in that face, in those eyes, in those drops of blood, in that wasted and emaciated figure. Now, the Jesus of history was no such person as this: he was the farthest possible removed from it. Jesus was a man who was taunted by the people of his time because he entered into all the gayeties and festivities of the common country life about him. He attended wedding feasts, he ate and drank with publicans and sinners; and the common people, it is said, liked to have him about, and listened to his talk. He was not a man of sorrows: he was a man with a great trust in God, with a grand mission to fulfil, and inspired and lifted up by the dream of that mission. Even the New Testament contradicts the absurdity of this idea; for Paul says, “who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.” His was an idyllic, happy, sunny, blessed life, though it did go out in cloud, like the sun setting in darkness after a lovely day.

But there was another ideal still. The world became too just and too reasonable to endure this conception of God and of the Christ. They said the idea of an innocent person being punished for the guilty was unfair and unjust, unworthy of God, and unworthy of man to think it. Jesus, then, or the Christ, was not the victim of God’s wrath, not the substitute for human suffering. Dr. Bushnell wrought out that theory of the atonement which goes still by his name, in which he created a new Christ-ideal. The Christ

was no longer the victim of God's wrath : he was simply the manifestation to the world of God's love. He was sent into the world, says Dr. Bushnell, not to make God love the world, but to reveal to the world the fact that God does love it, as a revelation of God's tenderness and love and willingness to forgive, and so as a persuasive power to lead men to come to him. Here, you see, is an entirely new Christ-ideal.

But there is one more ; and that is one you find prevalent to-day, almost throughout the Church. Perhaps I cannot quite say that ; but certainly it is one which is prevalent in Boston, prevalent through the liberal wing of the orthodox churches. Jesus is no longer any one of these things that I have been speaking about, though they are enshrined in all the established orthodoxies of the world ; but they are forgotten, they are laid one side. Jesus is none of them any longer. What is he ? He is simply the ideal man, the ideal of all that is divine and sweet and hopeful and true and loving and helping within the sphere of humanity. That is what almost all the preachers of the modern world mean when they talk about the Christ,—that is, all within the liberal ranks ; not liberal in the sense of Unitarian, but the more enlightened and liberal portion of the orthodox bodies. That is what Tennyson means. You read "In Memoriam," and it is full of Christ. What does Tennyson mean then ? Does he mean the historic Jesus of Nazareth ? Not at all. What did Tennyson really believe ? We have learned recently, since his death. His friend Mr. James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, the famous English review, says that Mr. Tennyson said to him : "There is a Power which watches over us, and our individuality endures. That is my belief, and that is all my belief." When Tennyson, then, sings about "ringing in the Christ that is to be," he is talking

about ringing in the ideal condition of humanity. And when Mr. Whittier talks about "the Christ within," "the inner Word," we know, from his own lips as well as by a fair interpretation of his writings, that what he means, too, is this ideal of all that is divine and sweet within the limits of humanity.

This is the Christ that Phillips Brooks always preached. When he clearly interpreted himself, you found that what he was speaking of, the Christ that was yesterday, to-day, and forever with him, was this divine ideal of humanity. He never raised the question as to whether this ideal is identical with the historic Jesus of Nazareth; but this is what he is talking about. Now, that you may not think this is imaginary on my part, let me give you one or two testimonials. I think I have spoken of one of these in this presence before, perhaps of both of them. Not long before his death I asked one of the most widely known and one of the most influential of our Unitarian clergymen if he would tell me what he meant by the use of the word "Christ,"—he was always preaching Christ. I said, "Will you tell me whether you mean, when you say 'Christ,' to identify Christ with the historic Jesus of Nazareth?" And he said, "No." He was talking about this divine ideal of humanity. In conversation with Heber Newton in his study in New York I asked him the same question, and received precisely the same answer. When he says "Christ," he means this divine ideal of humanity, not Jesus of Nazareth at all, necessarily. I was reporting these things, only a little while ago, to a well-known Episcopal clergyman in this city; and what do you think his reply was? Instead of being astonished, instead of having any criticism to make, he simply said: "Why, of course not. Of course, they did not mean the historic Jesus of Nazareth when they said 'Christ.' Of course,

they meant only the divine ideal of humanity." I said: "Then why did not they say so? Why did they let people hear them, year by year,—hear them say 'Christ,' and think they were talking about Jesus, when they were not?" I am perfectly willing to say "Christ" if I can be understood. These men have meant so much of the divine in man as a man can hold and manifest; but this is not the doctrine of the Trinity.

Such, then, have been some of the great Christ-ideals that have followed one another as the ages' thought has changed, from the beginning until to-day. Now let me speak of one or two points, by way of criticism, before I come to that which is last and most important of all. It seems to me that it is not right for a person who clearly sees what he is doing to go on talking about Christ in this way, when people are not understanding what he means. It is not fair to the brethren: it is the occasion of criticism and injustice among clergymen. I do not find fault; but I know there is no man in this city that loves, reverences, feels more tenderly toward the Nazarene, than do I. And yet I know I have been found fault with, year by year, because I have not preached Christ, as people have said, when I know that some who were "preaching Christ" meant what I mean. It seems to me that there is a point to be made in the interest of clear thinking and clear teaching, leading the people out of confusion and into the right way.

And, then, I have another criticism to make upon this common use of language. We use the word "Christ" and "Christian" as synonymous with all goodness, in such a way as to make us unfair, to make us exclusive, to puff us up with spiritual pride, and to create barriers between us and men of other religions. If a man is patient, we talk of his having the virtue of Christian patience; if he is resigned, we say it

is Christian resignation; if he is tender and helpful towards people, we talk about his exercising Christian charity. Have we any right to arrogate to ourselves the exclusive possession of patience, resignation, and charity? Was there no patience, no resignation, no charity, in the world before Jesus was born or the Christ heard of? Has there been no patience, no resignation, no charity, in the world outside of Christendom and among people that have never heard the name of Christ? Why, then, should we habituate ourselves to think that all the good that there is in Christendom should be forever associated with this particular label? Let us remember that Jesus did not invent nor use the word "Christian." Let us remember that all men are children of God, that God has manifested himself to all men, in all nations, and all ages. Let us, then, not dare to cultivate this exclusive Christian pride, that shall make it impossible for us to see good beyond our own borders or to join hands with noble men and women in any part of the world in accomplishing any great thing for humanity.

Now, is what I have said anything in derogation of Jesus of Nazareth? I speak of this for a moment, because I am very anxious not to be misinterpreted. Have I said anything against Jesus? Have I said anything to depress the imaginations of men concerning him, to lower him to any range of being beneath that which is his own? Rather, it seems to me, friends, that in making these discriminating distinctions, and in getting at the real heart of the wonderful Nazarene, we are lifting and honoring him. If Jesus is the Judge of all the earth, if he is the second person of the Trinity, if he is the Almighty God,—if he is any of these things, then he is not one of us. He is no ensample for you and me, he is no inspiration for you and for me. What is the use of your coming and telling me what God can do? It does not make me

anything but a man. What is the use of telling me how patient a God can be? I could be patient as he, were I a God. What is the use of holding him up for an example? I cannot imitate him, unless he be like me. Was Jesus like me? I think he was. The New Testament says he was "tempted in all points like as we are." I do not think he could have been perfect, in the ordinary sense of the word, if he was tempted.

A temptation implies that you want to take something that is wrong. To be invited to take something you do not want is not a temptation. If he was tempted in all points like as we are, I can bend my knees in his presence and be lifted up by the heroism of his self-control. We know he was not infallible in his teaching. But if he was a man, tempted in all points like as we are, born as we are born, if he died as we die, if he looked up to God the Father (as we know he did) as we look, if he had to fight out his life-battle as we fight out ours, and then could be so magnificent a type of a man as he was,—then we are cheered, we are inspired, we are lifted. Such as he was, humanity can be. It is in us; and so humanity is lifted and glorified, and we are thrilled and cheered by the divine possibilities of our being. To think, then, that a man born in Nazareth nearly nineteen hundred years ago, son of a carpenter, without anything that we call education, with only the common opportunities of his time, could have led such a life and uttered such words,—why, these simple facts of his manhood make him a thousand times more wonderful than as though he were the second person of the Trinity or the Judge of the earth. We honor him, then, we lift him up, we make him our leader, our helper, just so far as we keep strictly to the facts of his simple, loving, tender, faithful, wise, devoted human life.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

SOME one has said, with the force of an epigram, and perhaps with as much truth as epigrams are likely to have, that "the Christian religion has been in the world for eighteen hundred years, but that the religion of Christ has yet to be tried." I say this has the force of an epigram, and a grain of truth; and yet it is not strictly true, nor is it a fair statement of the facts. But it is of the first importance, in my judgment, that we should have in mind the distinction between Christianity as an historic movement and that something else which, however much it may have in common with it, is yet distinct and separable,—the religion of Jesus.

There are large numbers of people who feel that, when you dissent from any of the positions of historic Christianity, you at once become an enemy of Jesus, that you are antagonizing him, that you are showing disrespect to him and his teaching; for they have come to associate the two in their minds until they have become practically identical. And yet, as a matter of fact, one may be utterly loyal to the historic Jesus and his authenticated teachings, and yet not be, in the popular sense of that word, a Christian. It is sometimes true, indeed, to carry it a point farther, that one must antagonize certain phases, certain aspects of popular Christianity for the sake of his love for and loyalty to Jesus. We need, then, I say, to remember that the two ideas are sepa-

rable, and to keep them distinct in our minds. We need to do this in order that we may be just to people who differ in their opinions from us; and we need to do it in order that we may understand the trend and tendency of human history, the signs of the times, and what is likely to be the outcome in the future.

If you should start at the source of the Mississippi River and trace it down, you would see tributaries coming in on the right hand and on the left, large numbers of them, before you reached the Gulf of Mexico. And, if you traced up these tributaries, you would find that they, too, were formed by other tributaries that reach into the uttermost parts of the continent. We call it the Mississippi from Lake Itasca to the Gulf; and yet we know that its course and the quality of its waters have been modified at almost every mile of its advance. If you take the seething, fermenting elements which are ready to become crystallized, and then do the last thing,—cast in the last ingredient that is necessary to produce that crystallization,—you know that the thing which causes this new movement is something entirely different, or may be, from the elements which make up the crystal after it is formed. You put leaven into a mass of dough: let the leaven be powerful enough, and let there be time enough, and the whole mass will be permeated, lifted, modified, in the process that is thus initiated. But it may be a long while before certain parts of it are touched by this leavening process. And, until they are, though the leaven be in them, they have not partaken of it, and so are not one with its nature or obedient to its power. Cast a leavening influence into the great mass of humanity, and it may be ages shall pass by, though it be ever so mighty in its working, before the entire mass of the race shall be touched, modified, lifted, wrought upon, by this leavening power. And, meantime, there is the

most important of all distinctions to be kept in mind between the leaven and the dough,—that mass which is connected with it, which may lie adjacent to some part that is leavened, but which as yet is not leavened, not touched or modified, by its influence.

To use one more illustration : suppose a man starts an historic movement, either consciously or unconsciously. It becomes organized. He dies. The people that knew him, that stood next him, pass off the scene of action. But the institution goes on. It falls into other hands,—people of different training, different tastes, different ideas. It may keep its name ; and yet it may in the course of years become so utterly diverted from the thought, from the purpose, of the founder whose name it still wears that, if he could look upon it to-day, he would dissent from it at almost every point. This, I say, may be true. So that, because there is an historic movement still living in the world, which is supposed to have started with Jesus of Nazareth, and which still bears the name of the office which either he assumed or which was thrust upon him, it does not at all follow that this leavening movement has gone on so as to affect and touch all the different particles of this great mass of humanity, and that it is already worked over into the ideal of the founder.

Octavius B. Frothingham is the author of a book called "The Cradle of the Christ." In this book he outlines a belief which is shared by many eminent scholars in the world, to the effect that at just about the time when Christianity appeared the world-conditions were such that a new religion must have been born anyhow, even if there had been no Jesus of Nazareth at all. He takes the ground that Jesus was born in the "fulness of time"; that just at this point there converged mighty streams of influence from many different nations in the past, and that just here must

have been the cradle of some new religious movement ; that, if Jesus had not been born, it would have attached itself to some other historic person, and would have pursued substantially the same course which it has followed down the ages from that day to this. I do not say as to whether I agree with this position or not. I do not claim to know what would have been the course of human history, had things been different from what they were. I speak of this to call your attention to what is undoubtedly true. The religions of Greece and Rome were dying. There was coming a great change over the religious thought and life of the Hebrews ; and they felt convinced that some new birth was imminent. In this great, world-wide birth of a new religion there were acting influences from the East, from Egypt, from different parts of the world. They had begun to laugh at the old gods,—the sceptics and wits and philosophers of the time had,—showing that they no longer lived as powers in the beliefs of men. Augustus, the emperor, was much more worshipped than Jupiter or any of the Olympian deities ; and the people were importing from the far East, from Egypt, ideas, cults, practices. The Eleusinian mysteries were spreading among the people. There was a heart-hunger for a religion, just as you find thousands of people in England and America to-day who, in lieu of anything that fills their hearts and minds, are reaching out for Theosophy and a hundred and one things that shall stand for them in the place of a religion. There are some striking parallels, were this the place to dwell upon them, between the condition of things at that time and the condition of things to-day.

What I wish you to note specially, however, is that Christianity, when it took form, when we find it at last an organized institution, is made up, not exclusively of the teachings or the ideas of Jesus of Nazareth. It is Greek, it is Roman,

It is Hebrew, it is Egyptian, it is Oriental: it is the resultant of the confluent streams that have come pouring down the ages from many different nations of the antique world. Hardly a single doctrine of instituted and organized Christianity, hardly a single ceremony, hardly a symbol, hardly a rite of any kind, that originated with Christianity. I do not say they are any the worse, or the better, for this fact. I wish you simply to note the fact. Baptism, holy water, the eucharist, the main features of the mass, the doctrine of regeneration, the Trinity, the Virgin Mother and her Son,—nearly all these doctrines, and almost every single symbol of historic Christianity was in Egypt, older than Moses. And nearly all these rites and ceremonies and symbols have been found to have an independent origin in other parts of the world. When Father Huc, the great Catholic missionary, went to Thibet, he was amazed and appalled to find that there organized Catholicism, as he left it at home, confronted him among the Buddhists, so that he sent back word that the Devil had been there before him, and had so pre-occupied the ground by an imitation of Christianity that it was almost impossible for him to introduce the genuine thing. I speak of these things to show that those elements which have entered into and have made historic Christianity, most of them, are older than Christianity; most of them are not Christian in their origin, but pagan; most of them are no parts whatever of those things which were vital in the thought, the life, the purpose, the ideal, of the Nazarene. As we come down the ages, new contributions were made; for it was the policy of the Church, in every epoch of her advance, as she conquered the world, not to wipe out and destroy, but to baptize, to rechristen the rites, the ceremonies, the beliefs, that she discovered, and make them a part of Christianity. So our Christmas, our Easter, many of

these most beautiful services that we love the best, did not have their origin in Christianity at all.

We are ready now to make a little careful and detailed examination, and find out what forms Christianity has assumed in history, and what parts of these we can trace to the teaching of Jesus. I wish to go through with this as rapidly as I can, consistently with clearness, because I want to show you, at the outcome, that the signs of the times are most hopeful and inspiring. We are leaving behind much that has been called Christian, but we are not leaving behind anything that was essential in the teaching or the life of Jesus. Rather, we are coming to incorporate these things in the life of the world more and more.

I wish you to note the first meaning of the word "Christian," as it came into the world. We have a little statement in the Acts of the Apostles, to the effect that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Now, what was Christianity then? What made the distinction between the Jew and the Christian? Nothing in the wide world except the belief that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews expected the Messiah to come: the Christians believed that he had come, and that Jesus was he. "Belief on the Lord Jesus Christ," then,—that is, belief that Jesus was the Messiah,—that was what constituted Christianity at the time when that name first came into existence in the city of Antioch.

After we close the New Testament there is a period of a couple of centuries or so, when we know that a great religious ferment is going on in the Roman Empire, but when we cannot trace its historic outlines with any clearness. We can see dimly moving shapes; but we do not know much definitely as to what is going on. But, when Christianity does emerge from this darkness, it has become so mighty that it has climbed to the throne of the Roman Empire

in the person of Constantine. And a few years after that, in the year 325, Christianity formulates itself as dogma; and we have the Nicene Creed. This creed I wish to read to you, because this is what constituted Christianity in the fourth century.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. In one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made. Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scripture, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, whence he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake through the prophets. I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sin. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

That was Christianity in the fourth century. You need to look over that with a little care, and you will see how small a part of it was really the teaching of Jesus. The Trinity Jesus did not teach; the virgin birth Jesus did not teach; his own bodily resurrection of course he did not teach; his second coming he did teach; the establishment of any Catholic and Apostolic Church has not one word of his for foundation; no word as to baptismal regeneration; the general resurrection he believed, and of course he believed in the future life. I wish you to note simply how small a part of what was popular Christianity, even as early as the fourth

century, has any warrant in the teaching of Jesus. It is Greek speculation; it is the spirit of Roman domination; it is made up of sacrificial ideas of sin and righteousness and atonement that had come from the Hebrews. There were ideas borrowed from the Eleusinian mysteries and other cults of the East and from Egypt. But a very small part of it can be traced back to, or could ever have been built out of, either the life or the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

The next form that we find Christian teaching has assumed is what is called the Apostles' Creed. For, curiously enough, though it goes by that name, and though I have known theological students who actually thought the Twelve Apostles were the authors of it, we cannot trace it back earlier than the year 500; that is, it is later than the Nicene Creed. This Apostles' Creed you are familiar with. I need only run through with great rapidity its main points,—the belief in God, in the only Son, the virgin birth, the Catholic Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body (which whether Jesus believed we do not know, but we do know the Church itself does not believe it), and the life everlasting. This was the Christianity of the year 500.

Let us take the next step. We have come now to the time when the Holy Catholic Church was a great organized institution, dominating all Europe that was civilized, and parts of Asia and Africa,—the mightiest religious and one of the mightiest political powers that the world has ever seen. What did the Holy Catholic Church believe Christianity to be? It believed, first of all, that Christianity was identical with itself. It, this Church, was the body of Christ on earth, he its head, the Holy Spirit its inspiring soul. It believed all the ordinary doctrines that I have already outlined to you, those that had come into existence; and it believed, beyond those, this: First, that the Bible was only the

voice of the early Church, of no more authority than the voice that it should choose to utter in any succeeding age. It believed that salvation was by sacrament ; that these sacraments were the means by which the individual became incorporated into the body of Christ ; and that, being a part of this body, and so receiving all the life-giving influences which poured through this body, this was the means, and the one means, of salvation. And excision from the body, excommunication, being cast beyond its pale, was certain destruction.

It stood for God, then, on earth, spoke for God, represented God, wielded the powers of life and death over souls, held the keys of heaven, of all the future. That is what Christianity had come to be. It taught, indeed, a much more rational doctrine of the future world than came to be the belief of Protestants in after ages ; for it taught purgatory. It did not teach an eternal and hopeless damnation for all who were outside its pale, or for all, at any rate, who had been guilty of sins at the time of death, but gave them an opportunity of working out their salvation through penal suffering in purgatorial fires. But, now, how large a part of what was Catholicism then, of what is Catholicism to-day, how large a part did Jesus of Nazareth teach ? How large a part can be for one moment spoken of as the religion of Jesus ? Almost every one of its doctrines has no foundation in any word of Jesus. Its pretensions as to authority over human souls have no authority in any authentic word of Jesus. So that, if one would live out the religion of Jesus in the presence of the Catholic Church, he would find himself neglecting or possibly antagonizing all its most distinctive and peculiar claims. It may be a logical enough development from the condition of things existing when Jesus was born and taught and died ; but this does not authenticate it as the necessary or natural result of the teaching of Jesus.

I wish now to pass to the next great step in the development of historic Christianity. Many of these things you know ; but you will pardon me if I make my points, as I pass by them, as complete and clear as possible. There came the Protestant revolution ; and Christianity was summed up by the leading thinkers and theologians of that age in what still stands as the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. I speak of this because it is the best specimen of this type of Protestant theology with which I am acquainted, because it is still published all over Europe and America as the foundation on which a very large part of the Protestant Church still stands. I know it is up now for discussion, for revision ; but, so long as it stands printed by the authority of the Church, we may rightfully claim that it represents that Church. I do not propose to criticise or find fault with it. I have another purpose in view, the one I have had all through this morning. I wish to find out how large a part of this great charter of Protestantism, which stands as the framework and the bulwark of orthodox Christianity,—how large a part of this is warranted by any authentic word of Jesus. There are thirty-three chapters in this Confession of Faith. Of course, I shall not read you the whole of any of them. I wish to run over some of the more important.

First there is the doctrine of infallible inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, infallible in every word and in every part. The next doctrine is concerning the nature of God, involving the Trinity with which you are familiar. Next comes God's eternal decree, by which he foreordained everything that shall come to pass,—foreordained that a certain proportion of people shall be saved, to the glory of God's grace, and foreordained that a certain other proportion—and this the larger part—shall be passed by, and left to perish for the glory of God's justice. And among these to be

passed by are a large number of infants who are, according to this, left in the hopeless condition of those who must be lost. These decrees, you know, were before all worlds, so that next in the order of things comes the doctrine of the creation of the world, which the Presbyterian Confession of Faith declares was made out of nothing, thereby claiming to know more than the Bible itself on the subject; for the Bible does not teach any such doctrine as that. Then come the doctrines of the fall of man, sin, and punishment forever. Then God's covenant with man. Then the doctrine of Christ as mediator. Then the doctrine of free will, which is denied. Then the doctrine of effectual calling: nobody can be saved except those that God by his spirit effectually calls, and you know that you are effectually called only when you respond and go,—there is no other test. The next is justification, then adoption, sanctification, saving faith, repentance unto life, good works, the perseverance of the saints, and so on through the long list up to thirty-three. Now, the only point I wish to note is this. These represent the framework of what has been called Christianity, from the sixteenth century until the present time, among Protestants. And you know perfectly well that there never has been a time during all this period when this church, for example, would for one moment be allowed the name of Christian. Over and over again, even to-day, we are told that we are not Christians. And, if it be true that this Confession of Faith is the authentic definition of Christianity, I thank God with every breath I draw that I am not a Christian! For I stand with Jesus by my side; and the same law of exclusion which puts me beyond the pale of Christianity would compel him to go out with me, hand in hand. For hardly one single point in this Confession of Faith can trace itself to any authenticated word of the Nazarene,—hardly one.

But there has come into the religious world another type of Christianity, which I must note for a few moments. I outlined Christianity according to the creeds, in an article in the *North American Review* four or five years ago; and I was taken most sharply to task by one of the leading liberal orthodox ministers in this country, in one of the leading liberal orthodox papers, because, he said, I had misrepresented Orthodoxy: that was not Orthodoxy at all. I know that it was Orthodoxy according to all the printed creeds. But, of course, I could not deny the existence of another kind of Orthodoxy, when it was actually before my eyes. And I found that it was exceedingly difficult to define this new Orthodoxy. It holds, I think, concerning the Bible that in some sense it is a revelation of God or contains a revelation of God; but it does not define wherein or how with any definiteness. It also holds, in a certain indefinite way, the doctrine of the Trinity,—not the old orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, however. It also holds that there is something about the origin and nature of Jesus which separates him from ordinary men, which makes him different from common humanity; and yet this particular theologian that I speak of would not admit that there was any difference in kind. But he did admit certain miraculous features concerning his origin, his life, his resurrection, which seemed to single him out and set him apart in something more than the natural and ordinary way from the rest of humanity. I speak of these things to show how difficult it is to define this new Orthodoxy which claims to be Christianity in the modern world. It is entirely different from any of the Christianities that have preceded it: it would have been driven out of the country, with bitterness and hatred, as a heresy, even one hundred years ago. But now it is creeping into, reshaping, and dominating many of the supposed orthodox churches.

Here, then, is another type of Christianity. But, whatever there is,—and this I say deliberately and distinctly,—whatever there is that separates this liberal Orthodoxy from the position which we occupy here to-day, it is something for which there is not one particle of warrant in the teaching of Jesus.

Let me avoid what may be a serious misconception. I do not at all mean that the teaching of Jesus, that the spirit of Jesus, that the ideal of Jesus, that the example of Jesus, have not been present in these different epochs of the history of Christianity. They have been; and they have in a thousand ways uplifted and led the world. But here is the point: never forget it. It is so much of the religion of Jesus as has been present in these different ages of the world that has been the leavening and lifting power. And it has not been that part of the scheme which has been called Christianity, but which has no warrant in the teaching of Jesus. That which has lifted up and led and lighted and purified the world has been so much of Jesus as has lived in and led on the history of the world. Now let us come to note the religion of Jesus.

Certain intellectual conceptions, the framework of Jesus' life and teaching, are not permanent. Jesus, let us frankly say it, was mistaken in a great many of his intellectual ideals. He shared, I suppose, the common belief of his time in regard to the origin and history of the world and man. The cosmogony or cosmology of the world, as believed by his time, he accepted. Of course, all this framework of things has passed away. He believed in his own immediate second coming: that has proved not to be true. He held certain ideas concerning angels and the devil, the leader of the bad angels, and of a kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God, which are passing away. Some of these intellectual

ideas of Jesus are not permanent, and are not to remain ; but these are of almost no importance. Let us look within, and find what were the things that Jesus cared for, the things that he distinctly taught, that made the heart and soul of his religion.

First, there was that perfect, that utter trust in the universal fatherhood of God, a belief in the integrity and the goodness of the nature of things. This is not passing away, friends : every step in advance of science is only helping us to confirm and make real and vital this idea. Then the one great thing after this trust in God was the belief that the kingdom of God ought to come, ought to come now, ought to come here, on earth, and God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This was the great central key-note of all the life and the preaching of Jesus,—not a kingdom away off somewhere else, in some other age, but the coming of God's kingdom right here and right now. When they asked him where the kingdom of God was, he said, "It is among you already, it is begun."

Now, what was the nature of this kingdom ? It was nothing in the wide world but a perfect condition of humanity,—universal health, universal plenty, universal peace, universal love, universal happiness,—the perfect and ideal condition of man on earth,—that was the kingdom. And what was the condition of entrance into that kingdom ? How could one become a citizen of it ? Christianity, in almost every age of the world, has taught, as the necessary condition of citizenship in the kingdom of God, things that Jesus never taught. From the time of Antioch, down through the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, the establishment of the Catholic Church and its reign over the world, down through the Protestant revolution and all the Protestant creeds, down to the time in which we are living now, the orthodoxies

of the world have taught, as the necessary condition of entrance into the kingdom of God and becoming a citizen in that kingdom, conditions that Jesus never even alluded to.

Study the judgment scene that I have called your attention to before. Here they are on the right hand and on the left, the good who are to go into eternal joy, and the bad who are to be thrust out. And who are they, those on the right hand, those who are to be received with honor and glory into the eternal kingdom? They are only the people who have loved and served their fellow-men. Not one least, most distant hint of anything else as a condition. Never a word of belief, never a word of sacrament, never a word of baptism, never a word of being a member of any church, or a member of any nation even, or of any special religion even. Nothing but human goodness is the condition of admission to the kingdom of God, according to the authentic teaching of Jesus, according to the religion of Jesus. And then when you are in the kingdom, the test of your piety towards God is nothing else but your love for man. And, as I told you the other Sunday, Jesus teaches that, if you claim to love God and do not love man, the claim is a pretence and a falsehood.

And then, if you wish to be great in that kingdom, if you wish to be distinguished among the sons and daughters of God, in this perfect condition of mankind, what? You are not to come and beg for positions of prime ministers, on the right hand or the left. These places, and all high places, are simply for those who have rendered the noblest service. It is said of Jesus that he "made himself of no reputation"; and he says, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; and "he that will be great among you, let him be your servant." The greatest is only he who renders the greatest service: this is the religion of Jesus.

Now, then, if you are to be a follower of the religion of Jesus, you are to begin by loving and serving your fellow-men, by being good, being true, being faithful, being helpful. And, even if you forget Jesus and never speak his name, you are practising his religion if you live out his life. "Not every one who says unto me, Lord, Lord! but he that doeth the will." And, in another place, when one of the disciples presumed to rebuke somebody who manifested the power, but who was not a follower with them, he said, "He that is not against us is for us"; and many shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom, while you, who think on account of your rituals and your names and your shibboleths that you are going to enter in, will be thrust out.

The religion of Jesus, then, is the religion of love, the religion of human service,—not the religion of belief, not the religion of creed, not the religion of ritual or liturgy. And yet, friends, lest I be misunderstood here, let me again say: You may hold any theological belief you please, you may practise any ritual you please, you may intone as many liturgies as you please, you may have as large a creed as you will, you may belong to any church. None of these things need stand as a barrier between you and the religion of Jesus. Only the religion of Jesus is not these: it is something that transcends them all,—the religion of love, the religion of service.

In my sermon last Sunday I spoke of the Christ-ideals that, one after another, have dominated in the history of the Church. Suppose I try to suggest—I cannot adequately outline it—what, it seems to me, must have been the ideal of Jesus himself, his ideal of himself.

Jesus never dreamed of himself as a king, lording it over a

kingdom. Jesus never dreamed of himself as the second person in an incomprehensible Trinity. Jesus never dreamed of himself as the hard judge of the living and the dead. Jesus never dreamed of himself as set up on high to be lauded and praised and worshipped,—much more, to be made the excuse for hate to the men that have never heard his name. None of these things are the ideal of Jesus. He dreamed of himself as son of God, but not in any way shut off from his brethren; for even in that wonderful prayer recorded in the Gospel of John he prays, “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” His union with God was nothing else than that which he believed to be the common right of man,—a son of God, a son of man, a brother of all men who were also sons of God; an inspiration, a leader, a light to guide the wandering feet of his brethren; a helper towards that condition of things when love and service should rule the world.

And now at the end, friends, to show that these are not simply idealistic dreams of my own, I wish to read you just a few words from one of the most remarkable books that has appeared in many years. It is the Hibbert Lectures for 1888; and the lecturer was Edwin Hatch, a reader of ecclesiastical history at Oxford. After tracing the influence of Greek thought and Greek life in transforming and corrupting the simple truth of Jesus, he comes at last to close with words like these:—

“For, though you may believe that I am but a dreamer of dreams, I seem to see, though it be on the far horizon,—a horizon beyond the fields which either we or our children will tread,—a Christianity which is not new, but old, which is not old, but new; a Christianity in which the moral and spiritual elements will again hold their place, until men will be bound together by the bond of mutual service, which is the bond of

the sons of God ; a Christianity which will actually realize the brotherhood of men, the ideal of its first communities."

When the religion of Jesus, then, like the leaven, shall have permeated and wrought into its own likeness all that which has arrogated to itself the name "Christian" and has claimed to speak for him, it will ultimate at last in a condition of perfect human love and perfect human brotherhood ; and this will appear to be the true religion and the only service of God.



